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P. 229, line 5 of note 1, *for* "Receuil" *read* "Recueil"

P. 241, under "1767," *for* "religious" *read* "religions"

P. 241, under "1767," *for* "Freret" *read* "Fréret," and so elsewhere

A SHORT HISTORY

OF

FREETHOUGHT

ANCIENT AND MODERN

BY

JOHN M. ROBERTSON

THIRD EDITION, REVISED AND EXPANDED

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II

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Chapter XIII

THE RISE OF MODERN FREETHOUGHT—(*Continued*)

§ 4. *England*

While France was thus passing from general fanaticism to a large measure of freethought, England was passing by a less tempestuous path to a hardly less advanced stage of opinion. It was indeed a bloody age; and in 1535 we have record of nineteen men and five women of Holland, apparently Anabaptists, who denied the "humanity" of Christ and rejected infant baptism and transubstantiation, being sentenced to be burned alive—two suffering at Smithfield, and the rest at other towns, by way of example. Others in Henry's reign suffered the same penalty for the same offence; and in 1538 a priest named Nicholson or Lambert, refusing on the King's personal pressure to recant, was "brent in Smithfield" for denying the bodily presence in the eucharist.[1] The first decades of "Reformation" in England truly saw the opening of new vials of blood. More and Fisher and scores of lesser men died as Catholics for denying the King's "supremacy" in religion; as many more for denying the Catholic tenets which the King held to the last; and not a few by the consent of More and Fisher for translating or circulating the sacred books. Latimer, martyred under Mary, had applauded the burning of the Anabaptists. One generation slew for denial of the humanity of Christ; the next for denial of his divinity. Under Edward VI there were burned no Catholics, but several heretics, including Joan Bocher and a Dutch Unitarian, George Van Pare, described as a man of saintly life.[2] Still the English evolution was less destructive than the French or the German, and the comparative bloodlessness of the strife between Protestant and Catholic under Mary[3] and Elizabeth, the treatment

[1] Stow's *Annals*, ed. 1615, pp. 570, 575.

[2] Burnet, *Hist. of the Reformation*, ed. Nares, ii, 179; iii, 289; Strype, Memorials of Cranmer, ed. 1848–54, ii, 100.

[3] The Marian persecutions undoubtedly did much to stimulate Protestantism. It is not generally realized that many of the burnings of heretics under Mary were quasi-sacrifices on her behalf. On each occasion of her hopes of pregnancy being disappointed, some victims were sent to the stake. See Strype, ed. cited, iii, 196, and Peter Martyr, there cited; Froude, ed. 1870, v, 521 *sq.*, 539 *sq.* The influence of Spanish ecclesiastics may be inferred. The expulsions of the Jews and the Moriscoes from Spain were by way of averting the wrath of God. Still, a Spanish priest at Court preached in favour of mercy. Lingard, ed. 1855, v, 231.

of the Jesuit propaganda under the latter queen as a political rather than a doctrinal question,[1] prevented any such vehemence of recoil from religious ideals as took place in France. When in 1575 the law *De hæretico comburendo*, which had slept for seventeen years, was set to work anew under Elizabeth, the first victims were Dutch Anabaptists. Of a congregation of them at Aldgate, twenty-seven were imprisoned, of whom ten were burned, and the rest deported. Two others, John Wielmacker and Hendrich Ter Woort, were anti-Trinitarians, and were burned accordingly. Foxe appealed to the Queen to appoint any punishment short of death, or even that of hanging, rather than the horrible death by burning; but in vain. "All parties at the time concurred" in approving the course taken.[2] Orthodoxy was rampant.

Unbelief, as we have seen, however, there certainly was; and it is recorded that Walter, Earl of Essex, on his deathbed at Dublin in 1576, murmured that among his countrymen neither Popery nor Protestantism prevailed: "there was nothing but infidelity, infidelity, infidelity; atheism, atheism; no religion, no religion."[3] And when we turn aside from the beaten paths of Elizabethan literature we see clearly what is partly visible from those paths—a number of free-thinking variations from the norm of faith. Ascham, as we saw, found some semblance of atheism shockingly common among the travelled upper class of his day; and the testimonies continue. Edward Kirke, writing his "glosses" to Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar* in 1578, observes that "it was an old opinion, and yet is continued in some men's conceit, that men of years have no fear of God at all, or not so much as younger folk," experience having made them skeptical. Erasmus, he notes, in his *Adages* makes the proverb "Nemo senex metuit Jovem" signify merely that "old men are far from superstition and belief in false Gods." But Kirke insists that, "his great learning notwithstanding, it is too plain to be gainsaid that old men are much more inclined to such fond fooleries than younger men,"[4] apparently meaning that elderly men in his day were commonly skeptical about divine providence.

Other writers of the day do not limit unbelief to the aged. Lilly, in his *Euphues* (1578), referring to England in general or Oxford in particular as Athens, asks: "Be there not many in Athens which think there is no God, no redemption, no resurrection?" Further,

[1] The number slain was certainly not small. It amounted to at least 190, perhaps to 204. Soames, *Elizabethan Religious History*, 1839, p. 596–98. Under Mary there perished some 288. Durham Dunlop, *The Church under the Tudors*, 1869, p. 104 and refs.
[2] Soames, as cited, pp. 213–18, and refs.
[3] Froude, *Hist. of England*, ed. 1870, x, 545 (ed. 1875, xi, 199), citing *MSS. Ireland*.
[4] Gloss to February in the *Shepherd's Calendar*, Globe ed. pp. 451–52.

he complains that "it was openly reported of an old man in Naples that there was more lightness in Athens than in all Italy.....more Papists, more *Atheists*, more sects, more schisms, than in all the monarchies in the world";[1] and he proceeds to frame an absurd dialogue of "Euphues and Atheos," in which the latter, "monstrous, yet tractable to be persuaded,"[2] is converted with a burlesque facility. Lilly, who writes as a man-of-the-world believer, is a poor witness as to the atheistic arguments current; but those he cites are so much better than his own, up to the point of terrified collapse on the atheist's part, that he had doubtless heard them. The atheist speaks as a pantheist, identifying deity with the universe; and readily meets a simple appeal to Scripture with the reply that "whosoever denieth a godhead denieth also the Scriptures which testifie of him."[3] But in one of his own plays, played in 1584, Lilly puts on the stage a glimpse of current controversy in a fashion which suggests that he had not remained so contemptuously confident of the self-evident character of theism. In *Campaspe* (i, 3) he introduces, undramatically enough, Plato, Aristotle, Cleanthes, Crates, and other philosophers, who converse concerning "natural causes" and "supernatural effects." Aristotle is made to confess that he "cannot by natural reason give any reason of the ebbing and flowing of the sea"; and Plato contends against Cleanthes, "searching for things which are not to be found," that "there is no man so savage in whom resteth not this divine particle, that there is an omnipotent, eternal, and divine mover, which may be called God." Cleanthes replies that "that first mover, which you term God, is the instrument of all the movings which we attribute to Nature. The earth.....seasons.....fruits.....the whole firmament.....and whatsoever else appeareth miraculous, what man almost of mean capacity but can prove it natural." Nothing is concluded, and the debate is adjourned. Anaxarchus declares: "I will take part with Aristotle, that there is *Natura naturans*, and yet not God"; while Crates rejoins: "And I with Plato, that there is *Deus optimus maximus*, and not Nature."

It is a curious dialogue to put upon the stage, by the mouth of children-actors, and the arbitrary ascription to Aristotle of high theistic views, in a scene in which he is expressly described by a fellow philosopher as a Naturalist, suggests that Lilly felt the danger of giving offence by presenting the supreme philosopher as an atheist.

[1] *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit*, Arber's reprint, pp. 140, 153. That the reference was mainly to Oxford is to be inferred from the address "To my verie good friends the Gentlemen Schollers of Oxford," prefixed to the ed. of 1581. *Id.* p. 207.
[2] *Id.* p. 158.
[3] *Id.* pp. 161, 166.

It is evident, however, both from *Euphues* and from *Campaspe*, that naturalistic views were in some vogue, else they had not been handled in the theatre and in a book essentially planned for the general reader. But however firmly held, they could not be directly published; and a dozen years later, over thirty years after the outburst of Ascham, we still find only a sporadic and unwritten freethought, however abundant, going at times in fear of its life.

Private discussion, indeed, there must have been, if there be any truth in Bacon's phrase that "atheists will ever be talking of that opinion, as if they.....would be glad to be strengthened by the consent of others"[1]—an argument which would make short work of the vast literature of apologetic theism—but even private talk had need be cautious, and there could be no publication of atheistic opinions. Printed rationalism could go no further than such a protest against superstition as Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584), which, however, is a sufficiently remarkable expression of reason in an age in which a Bodin held angrily by the delusion.[2] Elizabeth was herself substantially irreligious,[3] and preferred to keep the clergy few in number and subordinate in influence;[4] but her Ministers regarded the Church as part of the State system, and punished all open or at least aggressive heresy in the manner of the Inquisition. Yet the imported doctrine of the subjective character of hell and heaven,[5] taken up by Marlowe, held its ground, and is denounced by Stubbes in his *Anatomie of Abuses*[6] (1583); and other foreign philosophy of the same order found religious acceptance. A sect called the "Family of Love," deriving from Holland (already "a country fruitfull of heretics"),[7] went so far as to hold that "Christ doth not signify any one person, but a quality whereof many are partakers"—a doctrine which we have seen ascribed by Calvin to the *libertins* of Geneva a generation before;[8] but it does

[1] Essay *Of Atheism*.

[2] Lecky, *Rationalism*, i, 103–104. Scot's book (now made accessible by a reprint, 1886) had practically no influence in his own day; and King James, who wrote against it, caused it to be burned by the hangman in the next. Scot inserts the "infidelitie of atheists" in the list of intellectual evils on his title-page; but save for an allusion to "the abhomination of idolatrie" all the others indicted are aspects of the black art.

[3] "No woman ever lived who was so totally destitute of the sentiment of religion" (Green, *Short History*, ch. vii, § 3, p. 369).

[4] Cp. Soames, *Elizabethan Religious History*, 1839, p. 225. Yet when Morris, the attorney of the Duchy of Lancaster, introduced in Parliament a Bill to restrain the power of the ecclesiastical courts, she had him dismissed and imprisoned for life, being determined that the control should remain, through those courts, in her own hands. Heylyn, *Hist. of the Reformation*, ed. 1849, pref. vol. i, pp. xiv–xv.

[5] See above, vol. i, pp. 435, 446, 459.

[6] Collier's Reprint, p. 190.

[7] Camden, *Annals of Elizabeth*, sub. ann. 1580; 3rd ed. 1635, p. 218. Cp. Soames, p. 214.

[8] Hooker, Pref. to *Ecclesiastical Polity*, ch. iii, § 9, ed. 1850. Camden (p. 219) states that the Dutch teacher Henry Nichalai, whose works were translated for the sect, "gave out that he did partake of God, and God of his humanity."

not appear that they were persecuted.[1] Some isolated propagandists, however, paid the last penalty. One Matthew Hamont or Hamond, a ploughwright, of Hetherset, was in 1579 tried by the Bishop and Consistory of Norwich "for that he denyed Christe," and, being found guilty, was burned, after having had his ears cut off, "because he spake wordes of blasphemie against the Queen's Maiistie and others of her Counsell."[2] The victim would thus seem to have been given to violence of speech; but the record of his negations, which suggest developments from the Anabaptist movement, is none the less notable. In Stow's wording,[3] they run:—

"That the newe Testament and Gospell of Christe are but mere foolishnesse, a storie of menne, or rather a mere fable.

"Item, that man is restored to grace by the meere mercy of God, wythout the meane of Christ's bloud, death, and passion.

"Item, that Christe is not God, nor the Saviour of the world, but a meere man, a sinfull man, and an abhominable Idoll.

"Item, that al they that worshippe him are abhominable Idolaters; And that Christe did not rise agayne from death to life by the power of his Godhead, neither, that hee did ascende into Heaven.

"Item, that the holy Ghoste is not God, neither that there is any suche holy Ghoste.

"Item, that Baptisme is not necessarie in the Churche of God, neither the use of the sacrament of the body and bloude of Christ."

There is record also of a freethinker named John Lewes burned at the same place in 1583 for "denying the Godhead of Christ, and holding other detestable heresies," in the manner of Hamond.[4] In the same year Elias Thacker and John Coping were hanged at St. Edmonsbury "for spreading certaine bookes, seditiously penned by one Robert Browne against the Booke of Common Prayer"; and "their bookes so many as could be found were burnt before them."[5] Further, one Peter Cole, an Ipswich tanner, was burned in 1587 (also at Norwich) for similar doctrine; and Francis Kett, a young clergyman, ex-fellow of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, was burned at the same place in 1589 for heresy of the Unitarian order.[6]

[1] See above, i, 458, as to a much more pronounced heresy in 1549, which also seems to have escaped punishment. Camden tells that the books of the "Family of Love" were burnt in 1580, but mentions no other penalties. Stow records that on October 9, 1580, "proclamation was published at London for the apprehension and severe punishing of all persons *suspected* to be of the family of love." Ed. 1615, p. 687. Five of them had been frightened into a public recantation in 1575. *Id.* p. 679.

[2] May 13, 1579. The burning was on the 20th.

[3] Stow's *Annals*, ed. 1580, pp. 1,194–95. Ed. 1615, p. 695.

[4] Stow, ed. 1615, p. 697; *David's Evidence*, by William Burton, Preacher of Reading, 1592 (?), p. 125.

[5] Stow, ed. 1615, p. 696.

[6] Burton, as cited. See below, pp. 7, 12, as to Kett's writings.

Hamond and Cole seem, however, to have been in their own way religious men,[1] and Kett a devout mystic, with ideas of a Second Advent.[2] All founded on the Bible.

> Most surprising of all perhaps is the record of the trial of one John Hilton, clerk in holy orders, before the Upper House of Convocation on December 22, 1584, on the charge of having "said in a sermon at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields that the Old and New Testaments are but fables." (Lansdowne MSS. British Museum, No. 982, fol. 46, cited by Prof. Storojenko, *Life of Robert Greene*, Eng. tr. in Grosart's "Huth Library" ed. of Greene's Works, i, 39, *note*.) As Hilton confessed to the charge and made abjuration, it may be surmised that he had spoken under the influence of liquor. Even on that view, however, such an episode tells of a considerable currency of unbelieving criticism.

Apart from constructive heresy, the perpetual religious dissensions of the time were sure to stimulate doubt; and there appeared quite a number of treatises directed wholly or partly against explicit unbelief, as: *The Faith of the Church Militant*, translated from the Latin of the Danish divine Hemming (1581), and addressed "to the confutation of the Jewes, Turks, Atheists, Papists, Hereticks, and all other adversaries of the truth whatsoever"; "*The Touchstone of True Religion*.....against the impietie of Atheists, Epicures, Libertines, Hippocrites, and Temporisours of these times" (1590); *An Enemie to Atheisme*, translated by T. Rogers from the Latin of Avenar (1591); the preacher Henry Smith's *God's Arrow against Atheists* (1593, rep. 1611); an English translation of the second volume of La Primaudaye's *L'Académie Française*, containing a refutation of atheistic doctrine; and no fewer than three "Treatises of the Nature of God"—all anonymous, the third known to be by Bishop Thomas Morton—all appearing in the year 1599.

All this smoke—eight apologetic treatises in eighteen years—implies some fire; and the translator of La Primaudaye, one "T. B.," declares in his dedication that there has been a general growth of atheism in England and on the continent, which he traces to "that Monster Machiavell." Among English atheists of that school he ranks the dramatist Robert Greene, who had died in 1592; and it has been argued, not quite convincingly, that it was to Machiavelli that Greene had pointed, in his death-bed recantation *A Groatsworth*

[1] Art. Matthew Hamond, in *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*
[2] Art. Francis Kett, in *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*

of Wit (1592), as the atheistic instructor of his friend Marlowe,[1] who introduces "Machiavel" as cynical prologist to his *Jew of Malta*. Greene's own "atheism" had been for the most part a matter of bluster and disorderly living; and we find his zealously orthodox friend Thomas Nashe, in his *Strange News* (1592), calling the Puritan zealot who used the pseudonym of Martin Marprelate "a mighty platformer of atheism"; even as his own and Greene's enemy, Gabriel Harvey, called Nashe an atheist.[2] But Nashe in his *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem* (1592), though he speaks characteristically of the "atheistical Julian," discusses contemporary atheism in a fashion descriptive of an actual growth of the opinion, concerning which he alleges that there is no "sect now in England so scattered [*i.e.*, so widely spread] as atheisme." The "outward atheist," he declares, "establishes reason as his God"; and he offers some sufficiently primitive arguments by way of confutation. "They follow the Pironicks [*i.e.*, Pyrrhonists], whose position and opinion it is that there is no hell or misery but opinion. Impudently they persist in it, that the late discovered Indians show antiquities thousands before Adam." For the rest, they not only reject the miracles of Moses as mere natural expedients misrepresented, but treat the whole Bible as "some late writers of our side" treat the Apocrypha. And Nashe complains feelingly that while the atheists "are special men of wit," and that "the Romish seminaries have not allured unto them so many good wits as atheism," the preachers who reply to them are men of dull understanding, the product of a system under which preferment is given to graduates on the score not of capacity but of mere gravity and solemnity. "It is the superabundance of wit," declares Nashe, "that makes atheists: will you then hope to beat them down with fusty brown-bread dorbellism?"[3] There had arisen, in short, a ferment of rationalism which was henceforth never to disappear from English life.

In 1593, indeed, we find atheism formally charged against two famous men, CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE and Sir WALTER RALEIGH, of whom the first is documentarily connected with Kett, and the second in turn with Marlowe. An official document,[4] preserved by

[1] Prof. Storojenko, *Life of Greene*, Eng. tr. in Grosart's "Huth Library" ed. of Greene's Works, i, 42-50. It is quite clear that Malone and the critics who have followed him were wrong in supposing the unnamed instructor to be Francis Kett, who was a devout Unitarian. Prof. Storojenko speaks of Kett as having been made an Arian at Norwich, after his return there in 1585, by the influence of Lewes and Haworth. Query Hamond?

[2] In *Pierce's Supererogation*, Collier's ed. p. 85.

[3] Rep. of Nashe's Works in Grosart's "Huth Library" ed. vol. iv, pp. 172, 173, 178, 182, 183, etc. Ed. McKerrow, 1904, ii, 114-129.

[4] MS. Harl. 6853, fol. 320. It is given in full in the appendix to the first issue of the selected plays of Marlowe in the Mermaid Series, edited by Mr. Havelock Ellis: and, with omissions, in the editions of Cunningham, Dyce, and Bullen.

some chance, reveals that Marlowe was given—whether or not over the wine-cup—to singularly audacious derision of the received beliefs; and so explicit is the evidence that it is nearly certain he would have been executed for blasphemy had he not been privately killed (1593) while the proceedings were pending. The "atheism" imputed to him is not made out in any detail; but many of the other utterances are notably in keeping with Marlowe's daring temper; and they amount to unbelief of a stringent kind. In *Doctor Faustus*[1] he makes Mephistopheles affirm that "Hell hath no limits .....but where we are is hell"—a doctrine which we have seen to be current before his time; and in his private talk he had gone much further. Nashe doubtless had him in mind when he spoke of men of "superabundance of wit." Not only did he question, with Raleigh, the Biblical chronology: he affirmed "That Moyses was but a juggler, and that one Heriots" [*i.e.*, Thomas Harriott, or Harriots, the astronomer, one of Raleigh's circle] "can do more than he"; and concerning Jesus he used language incomparably more offensive to orthodox feeling than that of Hamond and Kett. There is more in all this than a mere assimilation of Machiavelli; though the further saying "that the first beginning of religion was only to keep men in awe"—put also by Greene [if not by Marlowe], with much force of versification, in the mouth of a villain-hero in the anonymous play of *Selimus*[2]—tells of that influence. Marlowe was indeed not the man to swear by any master without adding something of his own. Atheism, however, is not inferrible from any of his works: on the contrary, in the second part of his famous first play he makes his hero, described by the repentant Greene as the "atheist Tamburlaine," declaim of deity with signal eloquence, though with a pantheistic cast of phrase. In another passage, a Moslem personage claims to be on the side of a Christ who would punish perjury; and in yet another the hero is made to trample under foot the pretensions of Mohammed.[3] It was probably his imputation of perjury to Christian rulers in particular that earned for Marlowe the malignant resentment which inspired the various edifying comments published after his unedifying death. Had he not perished as he did in a tavern brawl, he might have had the nobler fate of a martyr.

Concerning Raleigh, again, there is no shadow of proof of atheism,

[1] Act II, sc. i.

[2] Grosart's ed. in "Temple Dramatists" series, ll. 246–371. There is plenty of "irreligion" in the passage, but not atheism, though there is a denial of a future state (365–70). The lines in question strongly suggest Marlowe's influence or authorship, which indeed is claimed by Mr. C. Crawford for the whole play. But all the external evidence ascribes the play to Greene.

[3] *Tamburlaine*, Part II, Act II, sc. ii, iii; V, sc. i.

though his circle, which included the Earls of Northumberland and Oxford, was called a "school of atheism" in a Latin pamphlet by the Jesuit Parsons,[1] published at Rome in 1593; and this reputation clung to him. It is matter of literary history, however, that he, like Montaigne, had been influenced by the *Hypotyposes* of Sextus Empiricus;[2] his short essay *The Sceptick* being a naïf exposition of the thesis that "the sceptick doth neither affirm neither deny any position; but doubteth of it, and applyeth his Reason against that which is affirmed, or denied, to justifie his non-consenting."[3] The essay itself, nevertheless, proceeds upon a set of wildly false propositions in natural history, concerning which the adventurous reasoner has no doubts whatever; and altogether we may be sure that his artificial skepticism did not carry him far in philosophy. In the *Discovery of Guiana* (1600) he declares that he is "resolved" of the truth of the stories of men whose heads grow beneath their shoulders; and in his *History of the World* (1603–16) he insists that the stars and other celestial bodies "incline the will by mediation of the sensitive appetite."[4] In other directions, however, he was less credulous. In the same *History* he points out, as Marlowe had done in talk, how incompatible was such a phenomenon as the mature civilization of ancient Egypt in the days of Abraham with the orthodox chronology.[5] This, indeed, was heresy enough, then and later, seeing that not only did Bishop Pearson, in 1659, in a work on *The Creed* which has been circulated down to the nineteenth century, indignantly denounce all who departed from the figures in the margin of the Bible; but Coleridge, a century and a half later, took the very instance of Egyptian history as triumphantly establishing the accuracy of the Bible record against the French atheists.[6] As regards Raleigh's philosophy, the evidence goes to show only that he was ready to read a Unitarian essay, presumably that already mentioned, supposed to be Kett's; and that he had intercourse with Marlowe and others (in particular his secretary, Harriott) known to be freethinkers. A prosecution begun against him on this score, at the time of the inquiry concerning Marlowe (when Raleigh was in disgrace with the Queen), came to nothing. It had been led up to by a translation of Parsons's pamphlet, which affirmed that his private group was known as "Sir Walter Rawley's school of Atheisme," and that therein "both

[1] Writing as Andrew Philopater. See *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*, art. ROBERT PARSONS, and Storojenko, as cited, i, 36, and *note*.
[2] Translated into Latin by Henri Estienne in 1562.
[3] *Remains of Sir Walter Raleigh*, ed. 1657, p. 123.
[4] Bk. i, ch. i, sec. 11.
[5] Bk. ii, ch. i, sec. 7.
[6] Essay on the *Prometheus*.

Moyses and our Savior, the Old and the New Testaments, are jested at, and the scholars taught among other things to spell God backwards."[1] This seems to have been idle gossip, though it tells of unbelief somewhere; and Raleigh's own writings always indicate[2] belief in the Bible; though his dying speech and epitaph are noticeably deistic. That he was a deist, given to free discussion, seems the probable truth.

In passing sentence at the close of Raleigh's trial for treason in 1603, in which his guilt is at least no clearer than the inequity of the proceedings, Lord Chief Justice Popham unscrupulously taunted him with his reputation for heresy. "You have been taxed by the world with the defence of the most heathenish and blasphemous opinions, which I list not to repeat, because Christian ears cannot endure to hear them, nor the authors and maintainers of them be suffered to live in any Christian commonwealth. You know what men said of Harpool."[3] If the preface to his *History of the World*, written in the Tower, be authentic, Raleigh was at due pains to make clear his belief in deity, and to repudiate alike atheism and pantheism. "I do also account it," he declares, "an impiety monstrous, to confound God and Nature, be it but in terms."[4] And he is no more tolerant than his judge when he discusses the question of the eternity of the universe, then the crucial issue as between orthodoxy and doubt. "Whosoever will make choice rather to believe in eternal deformity [=want of form] or in eternal dead matter, than in eternal light and eternal life, let eternal death be his reward. For it is a madness of that kind, as wanteth terms to express it."[5] Inasmuch as Aristotle was the great authority for the denounced opinion, Raleigh is anti-Aristotelean. "I shall never be persuaded that God hath shut up all light of learning within the lantern of Aristotle's brains."[6] But in the whole preface there is only one, and that a conventional, expression of belief in the Christian dogma of salvation; and as to that we may note his own words: "We are all in effect become comedians in religion."[7] Still, untruthful as he certainly was,[8] we may take him as a convinced theist of the experiential school, standing at the ordinary position of the deists of the next century.

Notably enough, he anticipates the critical position of Hume as

[1] Art. RALEIGH, in *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*, xlvii, 192.
[2] *Id.*, pp. 200–201.
[3] Report in 1736 ed. of *History of the World*, p. ccxlix. "Harpool" seems an error for Harriott. Cp. Edwards, *Life of Sir Walter Raleigh*, 1868, i, 432, 436. It is after naming "Harpool" that the judge says: "Let not any devil persuade you to think there is no eternity in heaven."
[4] Ed. cited, p. xxviii.
[5] *Id.* p. xxiv.
[6] *Id.* p. xxii.
[7] *Id.* p. xvi.
[8] Cp. Gardiner, *History of England, 1603–1642*, 10-vol. ed. i. 132–35; iii, 150, 152.

to reason and experience: "That these and these be the causes of these and these effects, time hath taught us and not reason; and so hath experience without art."[1] Such utterance, if not connected with professions of piety, might in those days give rise to such charges of unbelief as were so freely cast at him. But the charges seem to have been in large part mere expressions of the malignity which religion so normally fosters, and which can seldom have been more bitter than then. Raleigh is no admirable type of rectitude; but he can hardly have been a worse man than his orthodox enemies. And we must estimate such men in full view of the low standards of their age.

The belief about Raleigh's atheism was so strong that we have Archbishop Abbot writing to Sir Thomas Roe on Feb. 19, 1618–1619, that Raleigh's end was due to his "questioning" of "God's being and omnipotence." It is asserted by Francis Osborn, who had known Raleigh, that he got his title of *Atheist* from Queen Elizabeth. See the preface (*Author to Reader*) to Osborn's *Miscellany of Sundry Essays*, etc., in 7th ed. of his *Works*, 1673. As to atheism at Elizabeth's court see J. J. Tayler, *Retrospect of Relig. Life of England*, 2nd ed. p. 198, and ref. Lilly makes one of his characters write of the ladies at court that "they never jar about matters of religion, because they never mean to reason of them" (*Euphues*, Arber's ed. p. 194).

A curious use was made of Raleigh's name and fame after his death for various purposes. In 1620 or 1621 appeared "*Vox Spiritus*, or Sir Walter Rawleigh's Ghost; a Conference between Signr. Gondamier.....and Father Bauldwine"—a "seditious" tract by one Captain Gainsford. It appears to have been reprinted in 1622 as "*Prosopoeia.* Sir Walter Rawleigh's Ghost." Then in 1626 came a new treatise, "Sir Walter Rawleigh's Ghost, or England's Forewarner," published in 1626 at Utrecht by Thomas Scott, an English minister there, who was assassinated in the same year. The title having thus had vogue, there was published in 1631 "*Rawleigh's Ghost*, or, a Feigned Apparition of Syr Walter Rawleigh to a friend of his, for the translating into English the Booke of Leonard Lessius (that most learned man), entituled *De Providentia Numinis et animi immortalitate*, written against the Atheists and Polititians of these days." The translation of a Jesuit's treatise (1613) thus accredited purports to be by "A. B." In a reprint of 1651 the "feigned" disappears from the title-page; but "Sir Walter Rawleigh's Ghost" remains to attract readers; and the translation, now purporting to be by John Holden, who claims to

[1] Ed. cited, p. xxii.

have been a friend of Raleigh's, is dedicated to his son Carew. In the preface the Ghost adjures the translator (who professes to have heard him frequently praise the treatise of Lessius) to translate the work with Raleigh's name on the title, so as to clear his memory of "a foul and most unjust aspersion of me for my presumed denial of a deity."

The latest documentary evidence as to the case of Marlowe is produced by Mr. F. S. Boas in his article, "New Light on Marlowe and Kyd," in the *Fortnightly Review*, February, 1899, reproduced in his edition of the works of Thomas Kyd (Clarendon Press, 1901). In addition to the formerly known data as to Marlowe's "atheism," it is now established that Thomas Kyd, his fellow dramatist, was arrested on the same charge, and that there was found among his papers one containing "vile hereticall conceiptes denyinge the divinity of Jhesus Christe our Saviour." This Kyd declared he had had from Marlowe, denying all sympathy with its view. *Nevertheless, he was put to the torture.* The paper, however, proves to be a vehement Unitarian argument on Scriptural grounds, and is much more likely to have been written by Francis Kett than by Marlowe. In the MSS. now brought to light, one Cholmeley, who "confessed that he was persuaded by Marlowe's reasons to become an Atheiste," is represented by a spy as speaking "all evil of the Counsell, saying that they are all Atheistes and Machiavillians, especially my Lord Admirall." The same "atheist," who imputes atheism to others as a vice, is described as regretting he had not killed the Lord Treasurer, "sayenge that he could never have done God better service."

For the rest, the same spy tells that Cholmeley believed Marlowe was "able to shewe more sound reasons for Atheisme than any devine in Englande is able to geve to prove devinitie, and that Marloe told him that he hath read the Atheist lecture to Sir Walter Raleigh and others." On the last point there it no further evidence, save that Sir Walter, his dependent Thomas Harriott, and Mr. Carewe Rawley, were on March 21, 1593–1594, charged upon sworn testimonies with holding "impious opinions concerning God and Providence." There was, however, no prosecution. Harriott had published in 1588 a work on his travels in Virginia, at the close of which is a passage in the devoutest vein telling of his missionary labours (quoted by Mr. Boas, art. cited, p. 225). Yet by 1592 he had, with his master, a reputation for atheism; and that it was not wholly on the strength of his great scientific knowledge is suggested by the statement of Anthony à Wood that he "made a philosophical theology, wherein he cast off the Old Testament."

Of this no trace remains; but it is established that he was a highly accomplished mathematician, much admired by Kepler;

and that he "applied the telescope to celestial purposes almost simultaneously with Galileo" (art. HARRIOTT in *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*; cp. art. in *Encyc. Brit.*). "Harriott.....was the first who dared to say A=B in the form A—B=O, one of the greatest sources of progress ever opened in algebra" (Prof. A. De Morgan, *Newton, his Friend and his Niece*, 1885, p. 91). Further, he improved algebraic notation by the use of small italic letters in place of Roman capitals, and threw out the hypothesis of secondary planets as well as of stars invisible from their size and distance. "He was the first to verify the results of Galileo." Rev. Baden Powell, *Hist. of Nat. Philos.* 1834, pp. 126, 168. Cp. Rigaud, as cited by Powell; Ellis's notes on Bacon, in Routledge's 1-vol. ed. 1905, pp. 674–76; and Storojenko, as above cited, p. 38, *note*.

Against the aspersion of Harriott at Raleigh's trial may be cited the high panegyric of Chapman, who terms him "my admired and soul-loved friend, master of all essential and true knowledge,"[1] and one "whose judgment and knowledge, in all kinds, I know to be incomparable and bottomless, yea, to be admired as much as his most blameless life, and the right sacred expense of his time, is to be honoured and reverenced"; with a further "affirmation of his clear unmatchedness in all manner of learning."[2]

The frequency of such traces of rationalism at this period is to be understood in the light of the financial and other scandals of the Reformation; the bitter strifes of Church and dissent; and the horrors of the wars of religion in France, concerning which Bacon remarks in his essay *Of Unity in Religion* that the spectacle would have made Lucretius "seven times more Epicure and atheist than he was." The proceedings against Raleigh and Kyd, accordingly, did not check the spread of the private avowal of unbelief. A few years later we find Hooker, in the Fifth Book of his *Ecclesiastical Polity* (1597), bitterly declaring that the unbelievers in the higher tenets of religion are much strengthened by the strifes of believers;[3] as a dozen years earlier Bishop Pilkington told of "young whelps" who "in corners make themselves merry with railing and scoffing at the holy scriptures."[4] And in the *Treatise of the Nature of God*, by Bishop Thomas Morton (1599), a quasi-dialogue in which the arguing is all on one side, the passive interlocutor indicates, in the process of repudiating them, a full acquaintance with the pleas of those who "would openly profess themselves to be of that [the

[1] Title of verses appended to trans. of *Achilles Shield*, 1598. Chapman spells the name Harriots.
[2] Pref. to complete trans. of Iliad.
[3] Bk. v, ch. ii, §§ 1–4. *Works*, ed. 1850, i, 432–36.
[4] *Exposition upon Nehemiah* (1585) in Parker Soc. ed. of *Works*, 1842, p. 401.

atheistic] judgment, and as far as they might without danger defend it by argument against any whatever." The pleas include the lack of moral control in the world, the evidences of natural causation, the varieties of religious belief, and the contradictions of Scripture. And such atheists, we are told, "make nature their God."[1]

From Hooker's account also it is clear that, at least with comparatively patient clerics like himself, the freethinkers would at times deliberately press the question of theism, and avow the conviction that belief in God was "a kind of harmless error, bred and confirmed by the sleights of wiser men." He further notes with even greater bitterness that some—an "execrable crew"—who were themselves unbelievers, would in the old pagan manner argue for the fostering of religion as a matter of State policy, herein conning the lesson of Machiavelli. For his own part Hooker was confessedly ill-prepared to debate with the atheists, and his attitude was not fitted to shake their opinions. His one resource is the inevitable plea that atheists are such for the sake of throwing off all moral restraint[2]—a theorem which could hardly be taken seriously by those who knew the history of the English and French aristocracies, Protestant and Catholic, for the past hundred years. Hooker's own measure of rationalism, though remarkable as compared with previous orthodoxy, went no further than the application of the argument of Pecock that reason must guide and control all resort to Scripture and authority;[3] and he came to it under stress of dispute, as a principle of accommodation for warring believers, not as an expression of any independent skepticism. When his pious antagonist Travers cited him as saying that "his best author was his own reason"[4] he was prompt to reply that he meant "true, sound, divine reason;.....reason proper to that science whereby the things of God are known; theological reason, which out of principles in Scripture that are plain, soundly deduceth more doubtful inferences."[5] Of the application of rational criticism to Scriptural claims he had no idea. The unbelievers of his day were for him a frightful portent, menacing all his plans of orthodox toleration; and he would have had them put down by force—a course which in some cases, as we have seen, had in that age been actually taken, and was always apt to be resorted to. But orthodoxy all the while had a sure support in the social and political conditions which made impossible the publication

[1] Work cited, pp. 8–11, 22.
[2] *Works*, i, 432; ii, 762–63.
[3] *Eccles. Pol.* bk. i, ch. vii; bk. ii, ch. i, vii; bk. iii, ch. viii, § 16; bk. v, ch. viii; bk. vii, ch. xi; bk. viii, § 6 (*Works*, i, 165, 231, 300, 446; ii, 388, 537). See the citations in Buckle, 3-vol. ed. iii, 341–42; 1-vol. ed. pp. 193–94.
[4] *Supplication* of Travers, in Hooker's Works, ed. 1850, ii, 662.
[5] *Answer to Travers*, *id.* p. 693.

of rationalistic opinions. While the whole machinery of public doctrine remained in religious hands or under ecclesiastical control, the mass of men of all grades inevitably held by the traditional faith. What is remarkable is the amount of unbelief, either privately explicit or implicit in the higher literature, of which we have trace.

Above all there remains the great illustration of the rationalistic spirit of the English literary renascence of the sixteenth century—the drama of SHAKESPEARE. Of that it may confidently be said that every attempt to find for it a religious foundation has failed.[1] Gervinus, while oddly suggesting that "in not only not seeking a reference to religion in his works, but in systematically avoiding it even when opportunity offered," Shakespeare was keeping clear of an embroilment with the clergy, nevertheless pronounces the plays to be wholly secular in spirit. While contending that "in action the religious and divine in man is nothing else than the moral," the German critic admits that Shakespeare "wholly discarded from his works.....that which religion enjoins as to faith and opinion."[2] And, while refusing the inference of positive unbelief on the poet's part, he pronounces that, "Just as Bacon banished religion from science, so did Shakespeare from art.....From Bacon's example it seems clear that Shakespeare left religious matters unnoticed on the same grounds."[3] The latest and weightiest criticism comes to the same conclusion; and it is only on presupposition that any other can be reached. One of the ablest of Shakespearean critics sums up that "the Elizabethan drama was almost wholly secular; and while Shakespeare was writing he practically confined his view to the world of non-theological observation and thought, so that he represents it in substantially one and the same way whether the period of the story is pre-Christian or Christian."

[Prof. A. C. Bradley, *Shakesperean Tragedy*, 2nd ed. p. 25. In the concluding pages of his lecture on *Hamlet*, Professor Bradley slightly modifies this statement, suggesting that the ghost is made to appear as "the representative of the hidden ultimate power, the messenger of divine justice" (p. 174). Here, it seems to the present writer, Professor Bradley obtrudes the chief error of his admirable book—the constant implication that Shakespeare planned his plays as moral wholes. The fact is that he found the ghost an integral part of the old play which he rewrote; and in making it, in Professor Bradley's words,

[1] Some typical attempts of the kind are discussed in the author's two lectures on *The Religion of Shakespeare*, 1887 (South Place Institute).
[2] *Shakespeare Commentaries*, Eng. tr. 1863, ii, 618–19.
[3] *Id.* ii, 586.

"so *majestical* a phantom," he was simply heightening the character as he does others in the play, and as was his habit in the presentment of a king. In his volume of lectures entitled *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* (1909), Professor Bradley goes more fully into the problem of Shakespeare's religion. Here he somewhat needlessly obscures the issue by contending (p. 349) that it is preposterous to suppose that Shakespeare was "an *ardent and devoted* atheist or Brownist or Roman Catholic," and makes the most of the poet's sympathetic treatment of religious types and religious sentiments; but still sums up that he "was not, in the distinctive sense of the word, a religious man," and that "all was, for him, in the end, mystery" (p. 353).]

This perhaps somewhat understates the case. The Elizabethan drama was not wholly secular;[1] and certainly the dramatists individually were not. Peele's *David and Bethsabe* is wholly Biblical in theme, and, though sensual in sentiment, substantially orthodox in spirit; and elsewhere he has many passages of Protestant and propagandist fervour.[2] Greene and Lodge give a highly Scriptural ring to their *Looking-Glass for London;* and Lodge, who uses religious expressions freely in his early treatise, *A Defence of Poetry, Music, and Stage Plays*,[3] later translated Josephus. Kyd in *Arden of Feversham*[4] accepts the Christian view at the close, though *The Spanish Tragedy* is pagan; and the pre-Shakespearean *King Leir and his Three Daughters* (1594), probably the work of Kyd and Lodge, has long passages of specifically Christian sentiment. Nashe, again, was a hot religious controversialist despite his Bohemian habits and his indecorous vein; Greene on his repentant deathbed was profusedly censorious of atheism;[5] Lilly, as we have seen, is combatively theistic in his *Campaspe;* while Jonson, as we shall see, girds at skeptics in *Volpone* and *The Magnetick Lady*, and further wrote a quantity of devotional verse. Even the "atheist" Marlowe, as we saw, puts theistic sentiment into the mouth of his "atheist Tamburlaine"; and of *Doctor Faustus*, despite incidental heresy, the *dénouement* is religiously orthodox. Thomas Heywood may even be pronounced a religious man,[6] as he was certainly a strong Protestant,[7] though an anti-Puritan; and his prose treatise *The*

[1] In the last edition I had written to that effect; but I have modified the opinion.
[2] The allusion to "popish ceremonies" in *Titus Andronicus* is probably from his hand. See the author's work, *Did Shakespeare Write "Titus Andronicus"?*, where it is argued that the play in question is substantially Peele's and Greene's.
[3] Shakespeare Soc. rep. 1853, pp. 14, 16–17, 18, 24, 28, etc.
[4] This has been shown to be his by Fleay and Mr. Crawford.
[5] See his *Groatsworth of Wit Bought with a Million of Repentance*.
[6] Compare the Jane Shore portions of his *Edward IV* with the close of *A Woman Killed with Kindness*. Note also the conclusion of *The English Traveller*.
[7] See the poem *England's Elizabeth*, 1631.

Hierarchy of the Blessed Angels (1635) exhibits a religious temperament. The same may be said of Dekker, who is recorded to have written at least the prologue and the epilogue for a play on Pontius Pilate,[1] and is believed to be the author of the best scenes in *The Virgin Martyr*, in which he collaborated with Massinger. He too uses supererogatory religious expressions,[2] and shows his warm Protestantism in *The Whore of Babylon*, as he does his general religious sentiment in his treatise *The Seven Deadly Sins*. Chapman was certainly a devout theist, and probably a Christian. In the "domestic" tragedy, *A Warning for Fair Women* (1599), which is conjecturally ascribed to Lodge, the conclusion is on Christian lines, as in *Arden;* and the same holds of *The Witch of Edmonton*, by Dekker and others. Of none of these dramatists could it be said, on the mere strength of his work, that he was "agnostic," though Marlowe was certainly a freethinker. The others were, first or last, avowedly religious. Shakespeare, and Shakespeare alone, after Marlowe, is persistently non-religious in his handling of life. *Lear*, his darkest tragedy, is predominantly pagan; and *The Tempest*, in its serener vein, is no less so. But indeed all the genuine plays alike ignore or tacitly negate the idea of immortality; even the conventional religious phrases of Macbeth being but incidental poetry.

In the words of a clerical historian, "the religious phrases which are thinly scattered over his work are little more than expressions of a distant and imaginative reverence. And on the deeper grounds of religious faith his silence is significant.....The riddle of life and death.....he leaves.....a riddle to the last, without heeding the common theological solutions around him."[3] The practical wisdom in which he rose above his rivals no less than in dramatic and poetic genius, kept him prudently reticent on his opinions, as it set him upon building his worldly fortunes while the others with hardly an exception lived in shallows and miseries. As so often happens, it was among the ill-balanced types that there was found the heedless courage to cry aloud what others thought; but Shakespeare's significant silence reminds us that the largest spirits

[1] Henslowe's Diary, ed. Greg, I, fol. 96.

[2] *E.g.*, the lines,

> The best of men
> That e'er wore earth about him, was a sufferer,
> A soft, meek, patient, humble, tranquil spirit,
> The first true gentleman that ever breathed,

at the close of Part I of *The Honest Whore;* and the phrase, "Heaven's great arithmetician," at the close of *Old Fortunatus*.

[3] Green, *Short Hist.* ch. vii, § 7 *end*. Cp. Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*, Lect. iii, § 115.

of all could live in disregard of contemporary creeds. For, while there is no record of his having privately avowed unbelief, and certainly no explicit utterance of it in his plays,[1] in no genuine work of his is there any more than bare dramatic conformity to current habits of religious speech; and there is often significantly less. In *Measure for Measure* the Duke, counselling as a friar the condemned Claudio, discusses the ultimate issues of life and death without a hint of Christian credence.

So silent is the dramatist on the ecclesiastical issues of his day that Protestants and Catholics are enabled to go on indefinitely claiming him as theirs; the latter dwelling on his generally kindly treatment of friars; the former citing the fact that some Protestant preacher—evidently a protégé of his daughter Susannah—was allowed lodging at his house. But the preacher was not very hospitably treated;[2] and other clues fail. There is good reason to think that Shakespeare was much influenced by Montaigne's Essays, read by him in Florio's translation, which was issued when he was recasting the old *Hamlet;* and the whole treatment of life in the great tragedies and serious comedies produced by him from that time forward is even more definitely untheological than Montaigne's own doctrine.[3] Nor can he be supposed to have disregarded the current disputes as to fundamental beliefs, implicating as they did his fellow-dramatists Marlowe, Kyd, and Greene. The treatise of De Mornay, of which Sir Philip Sidney began and Arthur Golding finished the translation,[4] was in his time widely circulated in England; and its very inadequate argumentation might well strengthen in him the anti-theological leaning.

> A serious misconception has been set up as to Shakespeare's cast of mind by the persistence of editors in including among his works without discrimination plays which are certainly not his, as the *Henry VI* group, to which he contributed little, and in particular the First Part, of which he wrote probably nothing. It is on the assumption that that play is Shakespeare's work that Lecky (*Rationalism in Europe*, ed. 1887, i, 105–106) speaks of "that melancholy picture of Joan of Arc which is perhaps the darkest blot upon his genius." Now, whatever passages Shakespeare may have contributed to the Second and Third Parts, it is certain that he has barely a scene in the First, and

[1] The old work of W. J. Birch, M.A., *An Inquiry into the Philosophy and Religion of Shakspere* (1848), is an unjudicial *ex parte* statement of the case for Shakespeare's unbelief; but it is worth study.

[2] The town paid for his bread and wine, no doubt by way of compliment.

[3] Cp. the author's *Montaigne and Shakespeare*, 2nd ed. sec. viii.

[4] *A Woorke concerning the trewnesse of the Christian Religion*, 1587. Reprinted in 1592, 1604, and 1617.

that there is not a line from his hand in the La Pucelle scenes. Many students think that Dr. Furnivall has even gone too far in saying that "the only part.....to be put down to Shakespeare is the Temple Garden scene of the red and white roses" (Introd. to *Leopold* Shakespeare, p. xxxviii); so little is there to suggest even the juvenile Shakespeare there. (The high proportion of double-endings is a ground for reckoning it a late sample of Marlowe, who in his posthumously published translation of Lucan had approached that proportion. Cp. the author's vol. on *Titus Andronicus*, p. 190.) But that any critical and qualified reader can still hold him to have written the worst of the play is unintelligible. The whole work would be a "blot on his genius" in respect of its literary weakness. The doubt was raised long before Lecky wrote, and was made good a generation ago. When Lecky further proceeds, with reference to the witches in *Macbeth*, to say (*id. note*) that it is "probable that Shakespeare.....believed with an unfaltering faith in the reality of witchcraft," he strangely misreads that play. Nothing is clearer than that it grounds Macbeth's action from the first in Macbeth's own character and his wife's, employing the witch machinery (already used by Middleton) to meet the popular taste, but never once making the witches really causal forces. An "unfaltering" believer in witchcraft who wrote for the stage would surely have turned it to serious account in other tragedies. This Shakespeare never does. On Lecky's view, he is to be held as having believed in the fairy magic of the *Midsummer Night's Dream* and the *Tempest*, and in the actuality of such episodes as that of the ghost in *Macbeth*. But who for a moment supposes him to have had any such belief? It is probable that the entire undertaking of *Macbeth* (1605?) and later of the *Tempest* (1610?) was due to a wish on the part of the theatre management to please King James, whose belief in witchcraft and magic was notorious. Even the use of the Ghost in *Hamlet* is an old stage expedient, common to the pre-Shakespearean play and to others of Kyd's and Peele's. Shakespeare significantly altered the dying words of Hamlet from the "heaven receive my soul" of the old version to "the rest is silence." The bequest of his soul to the Deity in his will is merely the regulation testamentary formula of the time. In his sonnets, which hint his personal cast if anything does, there is no real trace of religious creed or feeling. And it is clearly the hand of Fletcher, a no less sensual writer than Peele, that penned the part of Henry VIII in which occurs the Protestant tag: "In her [Elizabeth's] days.....God shall be truly known."[1]

[1] As to the expert analysis of this play, which shows it to be in large part Fletcher's, see Furnivall, as cited, pp. xciii–xcvi.

While, however, Shakespeare is notably naturalistic as compared with the other Elizabethan dramatists, it remains true that their work in the mass tells little of a habitually religious way of thinking. Apart from the plays above named, and from polemic passages and devotional utterances outside their plays, they hint as little of Christian dogma as of Christian asceticism. Hence, in fact, the general and bitter hostility of the Puritans to the stage. Even at and after Shakespeare's death, the drama is substantially "graceless." Jonson, who was for a time a Catholic, but reverted to the Church of England, disliked the Puritans, and in *Bartholomew Fair* derides them. The age did not admit of a pietistic drama; and when there was a powerful pietistic public, it made an end of drama altogether. To Elizabeth's reign probably belongs the *Atheist's Tragedy* of Cyril Tourneur, first published in 1611, but evidently written in its author's early youth—a coarse and worthless performance, full of extremely bad imitations of Shakespeare.[1] But to the age of Elizabeth also belongs, perhaps, the sententious tragedy of *Mustapha* by Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, first surreptitiously published in 1609. A century and a half later the deists were fond of quoting[2] the concluding *Chorus Sacerdotum*, beginning:

O wearisome condition of humanity,
Born under one law, to another bound;
Vainly begot, and yet forbidden vanity;
Created sick, commanded to be sound:
If nature did not take delight in blood,
She would have made more easy ways to good.

It is natural to suspect that the author of such lines was less orthodox than his own day had reputed him; and yet the whole of his work shows him much pre-occupied with religion, though perhaps in a deistic spirit. But Brooke's introspective and undramatic poetry is an exception: the prevailing colour of the whole drama of the Shakespearean period is pre-Puritan and semi-pagan; and the theological spirit of the next generation, intensified by King James, was recognized by cultured foreigners as a change for the worse.[3] The spirit of free learning for the time was gone, expelled by theological rancours; and when Selden ventured in his *History of Tythes* (1618) to apply the method of dispassionate historical criticism to ecclesiastical matters he was compelled to make a formal retractation.[4] Early Protestants had attacked, as a

[1] Cp. Seccombe and Allen, *The Age of Shakspere*, 1903, ii, 189.
[2] Alberti, *Briefe betreffende den Zustand der Religion in Gross-Britannien*, Hanover, 1752, ii, 429. Alberti reads "God" at the end of the passage; I follow Grosart's edition.
[3] Hallam, *Lit. Europe*, ii, 371, 376; Pattison, *Isaac Casaubon*, 2nd ed. p. 286 *sq.*
[4] Pattison, as cited, p. 290; G. W. Johnson, *Memoirs of John Selden*, 1835, pp. 56-70.

papal superstition, the doctrine that tithes were levied *jure divino*: Protestants had now come to regard as atheistic the hint that tithes were levied otherwise.[1]

Not that rationalism became extinct. The "Italianate" incredulity as to a future state, which Sir John Davies had sought to repel by his poem, *Nosce Teipsum* (1599), can hardly have been overthrown even by that remarkable production, which in the usual orthodox way pronounces all doubters to be "light and vicious persons," who, "though they would, cannot quite be beasts."[2] And there were other forms of doubt. In 1602 appeared *The Unmasking of the Politique Atheist, by J. H.* [John Hull], *Batchelor of Divinitie*, which, however, is in the main a mere attempt to retort upon Catholics the charge of atheism laid by them against Protestants. Soon after, in 1605, we find Dr. John Dove producing a *Confutation of Atheisme* in the manner of previous continental treatises, making the word "atheism" cover many shades of theism; and an essayist writing in 1608 asserts that, on account of the self-seeking and corruption so common among churchmen, "prophane Atheisme hath taken footing in the hearts of ignorant and simple men."[3] The orthodox Ben Jonson, in his *Volpone* (1607), puts in the mouth of a fool[4] the lines:—

> And then, for your religion, profess none,
> But wonder at the diversity of all;
> And, for your part, protest, were there no other
> But simply the laws o' th' land, you would content you.
> Nic Machiavel and Monsieur Bodin both
> Were of this mind.

But the testimony is not the less significant; as is the account in *The Magnetick Lady* (1632) of

> A young physician to the family
> That, letting God alone, ascribes to Nature
> More than her share; licentious in discourse,
> And in his life a profest voluptuary.[5]

Such statements of course prove merely a frequent coolness towards religion, not a vogue of reasoned unbelief. But the existence of rationalizing heresy is attested by the burning of two men, Bartholomew Legate and Edward Wightman, for avowing Unitarian views, in 1612. These, the last executions for heresy in England, were results of the theological zeal of King James,

[1] *Memoirs* cited, pp. 60-61. On the whole question see the *Review* appended by Selden to his *History* after a few copies had been distributed.
[2] *Poems of Sir John Davies*, ed. Grosart, 1876, i, 82, 83.
[3] *Essaies Politicke and Morall*, by D. T. Gent, 1608, fol. 9.
[4] Act iv, sc. 1.
[5] Act i, sc. 1. Jonson himself could have been so indicted on the strength of certain verses.

stimulated by the Calvinistic fanaticism of Archbishop Abbot, the predecessor of Laud.

James's career as a persecutor began characteristically in a meddlesome attack upon a professor in Holland. A German theologian of Socinian leanings, named Conrad Vorstius, professor at Steinfurth, had produced in 1606 a somewhat heretical treatise, *De Deo*, but had nevertheless been appointed in 1610 professor of theology at Leyden, in succession to Arminius. It was his acceptance of Arminian views, joined with his repute as a scholar,[1] that secured him the invitation, which was given without the knowledge that at a previous period he had been offered a similar appointment by the Socinians. In his *Anti-Bellarminus contractus*, "a brief refutation of the four tomes of Bellarmin," he had taken the Arminian line, repudiating the Calvinist positions which, in the opinion of Arminius, could not be defended against the Catholic attack. But he was too speculative and ratiocinative to be safe in an age in which the fear of spreading Socinianism and the hate of Calvinists towards Arminianism had set up a reign of terror. Vorstius was both "unsettling" and heterodox. His opinions were "such as in our own day would certainly disqualify him from holding such an office in any Christian University";[2] and James, worked upon by Abbot, went so far as to make the appointment of Vorstius a diplomatic question. The stadhouder Maurice and the bulk of the Dutch clergy being of his view, the more tolerant statesmen of Holland, and the mercantile aristocracy, yielded from motives of prudence, and Vorstius was dismissed in order to save the English alliance. Remaining thenceforth without employment, he was further denounced in 1619 by the Synod of Dort, and banished by the States General. Thereafter he lived for two years in hiding; and soon after obtaining a refuge in Holstein, died, worn out by his troubles. In England, meantime, James drew up with his own hands a catalogue of the heresies found by him in Vorstius's treatise, and caused the book to be burned in London and at the two Universities.[3]

[1] He had been offered professorships of divinity at Saumur and Marburg.

[2] Gardiner, *History of England, 1603-1642*, 4th ed. ii, 128. Cp. Bayle, art. VORSTIUS, Note *N*. By his theological opponents and by James, Vorstius was of course called an atheist. He was in reality not a Socinian, but a "strict Arian, who believed that the Son of God was at first created by the Father, and then delegated to create the universe—a sort of inferior deity, who was nevertheless entitled to religious homage" (James Nichols, note to App. P. on Brandt's Life of Arminius in *Works of Arminius*, 1825, i, 218). Nichols gives a full survey of the subject, pp. 202-237. Fuller (*Ch. Hist.* B. x, cent. 17, sec. iv, §§ i-5) tells the story, and pronounces the opinions of Vorstius "fitter to be remanded to hell than committed to writing."

[3] Bayle (art. cited, Note *F*) says *both* Universities, as does Fuller. At the Synod of Dort, however, the British representatives read only, it seems, a decree (dated Sept. 21, 1611) of the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge, ordering the burning of the book there. (Nichols, Account of the Synod of Dort, in *Works of Arminius*, i, 497).

On the heels of this amazing episode came the cases of Wightman and Legate. Finding, in a personal conversation, that Legate had "ceased to pray to Christ," the King had him brought before the Bishop of London's Consistory Court, which sentenced the heretic to Newgate. Being shortly released, he had the imprudence to threaten an action for false imprisonment, whereupon he was re-arrested. Chief Justice Coke held that, technically, the Consistory Court could not sentence to burning; but Hobart and Bacon, the law officers of the Crown, and other judges, were of opinion that it could. Legate, accordingly, was duly tried, sentenced, and burned at Smithfield; and Wightman a few days later was similarly disposed of at Lichfield.[1]

Bacon's share in this matter is obscure, and has not been discussed by either his assailants or his vindicators. As for the general public, the historian records that "not a word was uttered against this horrible cruelty. As we read over the brief contemporary notices which have reached us, we look in vain for the slightest intimation that the death of these two men was regarded with any other feelings than those with which the writers were accustomed to hear of the execution of an ordinary murderer. If any remark was made, it was in praise of James for the devotion which he showed to the cause of God."[2] That might have been reckoned on. It was not twenty years since Hamond, Lewis, Cole, and Kett had been burned on similar grounds; and there had been no outcry then. For generations "direness" had been too familiar to men's thoughts to admit of their being shocked by a judicial murder or two the more. Catholic priests had been executed by the score: why not a pair of Unitarians?[3] Little had gone on in the average intellectual life in the interim save religious discussion and Bibliolatry, and not from such culture could there come any growth of human kindness or any clearer conception of the law of reciprocity. But, whether by force of recoil from a revival of the fires of Smithfield or from a perception that mere cruelty did not avail to destroy heresy, the theological *ultima ratio* was never again resorted to on English ground.

Though no public protest was made, the retrospective Fuller

[1] Gardiner, pp. 129–30. Fuller (as last cited, §§ 6–14) gives a list of Legate's "damnable tenets." See it in Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner's *Penalties upon Opinion*, pp. 12–14.

[2] Gardiner, as cited. Fuller is cheerfully acquiescent, though he notes the private demurs, which he denounces. "God," he says, "may seem well pleased with this seasonable severity."

[3] In 1580 Stow records how one Randall was put on trial for "conjuring to know where treasure was hid in the earth and goods feloniously taken were become"; and four others were tried "for being present." Four were found guilty and sentenced to be hanged. Randall was executed, and the others reprieved. (Ed. 1615, p. 688.)

testifies that "such burning of heretics much startled common people, pitying all in pain, and prone to asperse justice itself with cruelty, because of the novelty (!) and hideousness of the punishment."[1] It is noteworthy that within a few years of the burning of Legate and Wightman there appeared quite a cluster of treatises explicitly contending for toleration. In 1614 came *Religion's Peace: or, a Plea for Liberty of Conscience*, by Leonard Busher, the first English book of the kind. In 1615 came *Persecution for Religion Judged and Condemned;* and in 1620 *An Humble Supplication to the King's Majesty*, pressing the same doctrine.[2] There is no record of any outcry over these works, though they are tolerably freespoken in their indictment of the coercive school; and they had all to be reprinted a generation later, their point having never been carried; but it may be surmised that their appeal, which is substantially well reasoned from a secular as well as from a theological point of view, had something to do with the abandonment of persecution unto death. Even King James, in opening the Parliament of 1614, professed to recognize that no religion or heresy was ever extirpated by violence.

That an age of cruel repression of heresy had promoted unbelief is clear from the *Atheomastix* of Bishop Fotherby (1622), which notes among other things that as a result of constant disputing "the Scriptures (with many) have lost their authority, and are thought onely fit for the ignorant and idiote."[3] On this head the bishop attempts no answer; and on his chosen theme he is perhaps the worst of all apologists. His admission that there can be no à priori proof of deity[4] may be counted to him for candour; but the childishness of his reasoning à posteriori excludes the ascription of philosophic insight. He does but use the old pseudo-arguments of universal consent and design, with the simple device of translating polytheistic terms into monotheistic. All the while he makes the usual suggestions that there are few or no atheists to convert, and these not worth converting—this at a folio's length. The book tells only of difficulties evaded by vociferation. And while the growing stress of the strife between the ecclesiasticism of the Crown and the forces of nonconformity more and more thrust to the front religio-political issues, there began alongside of those strifes the new and

[1] Fuller actually alleges that "there was none ever after that openly avowed these heretical doctrines"—an unintelligible figment.

[2] All reprinted in 1846 for the Hanserd Knollys Society, with histor. introd. by E. B. Underhill, in the vol. *Tracts on Liberty of Conscience and Persecution, 1614–1661*. They do not speak of Legate or Wightman.

[3] *Atheomastix*, 1622, pref. Sig. B. 3, *verso*. The work was posthumous and incomplete.

[4] Bk. i, ch. i, p. 5.

powerful propaganda of deism, which, beginning with the Latin treatise, *De Veritate*, of Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1624), was gradually to leaven English thought for over a century.

Further, there now came into play the manifold influence of FRANCIS BACON, whose case illustrates perhaps more fully than any other the difficulties, alike external and internal, in the way of right thinking. Taken as a whole, his work is on account of those difficulties divided against itself, insisting as he does alternately on a strict critical method and on the subjection of reason to the authority of revelation. He sounds a trumpet-call to a new and universal effort of free and circumspect intelligence; and on the instant he stipulates for the prerogative of Scripture. Though only one of many who assailed alike the methodic tyranny of Aristotelianism[1] and the methodless empiricism of the ordinary "scientific" thought of the past, he made his attack with a sustained and manifold force of insight and utterance which still entitles him to pre-eminence as the great critic of wrong methods and the herald of better. Yet he not only transgresses often his own principal precepts in his scientific reasoning; he falls below several of his contemporaries and predecessors in respect of his formal insistence on the final supremacy of theology over reason, alike in physics and in ethics. Where Hooker is ostensibly seeking to widen the field of rational judgment on the side of creed, Bacon, the very champion of mental emancipation in the abstract, declares the boundary to be fixed.

Of those lapses from critical good faith, part of the explanation is to be found in the innate difficulty of vital innovation for all intelligences; part in the special pressures of the religious environment. On the latter head Bacon makes such frequent and emphatic protest that we are bound to infer on his part a personal experience in his own day of the religious hostility which long followed his memory. "Generally," he wrote of himself in one fragment, "he perceived in men of devout simplicity this opinion, that the secrets of nature were the secrets of God, and part of that glory whereinto the mind of man if it seek to press shall be oppressed;.....and on the other side, in men of a devout policy he noted an inclination to have the people depend upon God the more when they are less acquainted with second causes, and to have no stirring in philosophy, lest it may lead to innovation in divinity or else should discover

[1] In the *Advancement of Learning*, bk. i (Routledge ed. p. 54), he himself notes how, long before his time, the new learning had in part discredited the schoolmen.

matter of further contradiction to divinity"[1]—a summary of the whole early history of the resistance to science.[2] In the works which he wrote at the height of his powers, especially in his masterpiece, the *Novum Organum* (1620), where he comes closest to the problems of exact inquiry, he specifies again and again both popular superstition and orthodox theology as hindrances to scientific research, commenting on "those who out of faith and veneration mix their philosophy with theology and traditions,"[3] and declaring that of the drawbacks science had to contend with "the corruption of philosophy by superstition and an admixture of theology is far the more widely spread, and does the greatest harm, whether to entire systems or to their parts. For the human understanding is obnoxious to the influence of the imagination no less than to the influence of common notions."[4] In the same passage he exclaims at the "extreme levity" of those of the moderns who have attempted to "found a system of natural philosophy on the first chapter of Genesis, on the book of Job, and other parts of the sacred writings";[5] and yet again, coupling as obstinate adversaries of Natural Philosophy "superstition, and the blind and immoderate zeal of religion," he roundly affirms that "by the simpleness of certain divines access to any philosophy, however pure, is well nigh closed."[6] These charges are repeatedly salved by such claims as that "true religion" puts no obstacles in the way of science;[7] that the book of Job runs much to natural philosophy;[8] and, in particular, in the last book of the *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, redacted after his disgrace, by the declaration—more emphatic than those of the earlier *Advancement of Learning*—that "Sacred Theology ought to be derived from the word and oracles of God, and not from the light of nature or the dictates of reason."[9] In this mood he goes so far as to declare, with the thorough-going obscurantists, that "the more discordant and incredible the divine mystery is, the more honour is shown to God in believing it, and the nobler is the victory of faith."

[It was probably such deliverances as these that led to the ascription to Bacon of *The Christian Paradoxes*, first published

[1] *Filum Labyrinthi*—an English version of the *Cogitata et Visa*—§ 7.
[2] Cp. Huarte, cited above, p. 471.
[3] *Nov. Org.* bk. i, Aph. 62 (*Works*, Routledge ed. p. 271). [4] *Id.* Aph. 65.
[5] *Id. ib.* Cp. the *Advancement of Learning*, bk. ii, and the *De Augmentis*, bk. ix, near end. (Ed. cited, pp. 173, 634.)
[6] *Nov. Org.* Aph. 89. Cp. Aph. 46, 49, 96; the *Valerius Terminus*, ch. xxv; the English *Filum Labyrinthi*, § 7; and the *De Principiis atque Originibus* (ed. cited, p. 650).
[7] *Valerius Terminus*, cap. i. (Ed. cited, p. 188.)
[8] *Id.* p. 187; *Filum Labyrinthi*, p. 209.
[9] Bk. ix, ch. i. (Ed. cited, p. 631.) Compare *Valerius Terminus*, ch. i (p. 186), and *De Aug.* bk. iii, ch. ii (p. 456), as to the impossibility of knowing the will and character of God from Nature, though (*De Aug.* last cit.) it reveals his power and glory.

(surreptitiously), without author's name, in 1645. As has been shown by Dr. Grosart (*Lord Bacon* NOT *the Author of "The Christian Paradoxes,"* 1865) that treatise was really by Herbert Palmer, B.D., who published it in full in part ii of his *Memorials of Godliness and Christianity*, 5th ed. 1655. The argument drawn from this treatise as to Bacon's skepticism is a twofold mystification. The *Paradoxes* are the deliberate declaration of a pietist that he believes the dogmas of revelation without rational comprehension. The style is plainly not Bacon's; but Bacon had said the same thing in the sentence quoted above. Dr. Grosart's explosive defence against the criticism of Ritter (work cited, p. 14) is an illustration of the intellectual temper involved.]

Yet even in the calculated extravagance of this last pronouncement there is a ground for question whether the fallen Chancellor, hoping to retrieve himself, and trying every device of his ripe sagacity to avert opposition, was not straining his formal orthodoxy beyond his real intellectual habit. As against such wholesale affirmation we have his declarations that "certain it is that God worketh nothing in nature but by second causes," and that any pretence to the contrary "is mere imposture as it were in favour towards God, and nothing else but to offer to the author of truth the unclean sacrifice of a lie";[1] his repeated objection to the discussion of Final Causes;[2] his attack on Plato and Aristotle for rejecting the atheistic scientific method of Democritus;[3] his peremptory assertion that motion is a property of matter;[4] and his almost Democritean handling of the final problem, in which he insists that primal matter is, "next to God, the cause of causes, itself only without a cause."[5] Further, though he speaks of Scriptural miracles in a conventional way,[6] he drily pronounces in one passage that, "as for narrations touching the prodigies and miracles of religions, they are either not true or not natural, and therefore impertinent for the story of nature."[7] Finally, as against the formal capitulation to theology at the close of the *De Augmentis*, he has left standing in the first book of the Latin version the ringing doctrine of the original *Advancement of Learning* (1605), that "there is no power on earth which setteth

[1] *Advancement*, bk. i (ed. cited, p. 45). Cp. *Valerius Terminus*, ch. i (p. 187).
[2] *Advancement*, bk. ii; *De Augmentis*, bk. iii, chs. iv and v; *Valerius Terminus*, ch. xxv; *Novum Organum*, bk. i, Aph. 48; bk. ii, Aph. 2. (Ed. cited, pp. 96, 205, 266, 302, 471, 473.)
[3] *De Principiis atque Originibus*. (Ed. cited, pp. 649–50.) Elsewhere (*De Aug.* bk. iii, ch. iv, p. 471) he expressly puts it that the system of Democritus, which "removed God and mind from the structure of things," was more favourable to true science than the teleology and theology of Plato and Aristotle.
[4] *Id.* pp. 651, 657.
[5] *Id.* p. 648.
[6] *De Augmentis*, bk. iii, ch. ii; bk. iv, ch. ii. (Ed. cited, pp. 456, 482.)
[7] *Id.* bk. ii, ch. i. (Ed. cited, p. 428.)

up a throne or chair in the spirits and souls of men, and in their cogitations, imaginations, opinions, and beliefs, but knowledge and learning";[1] and in his *Wisdom of the Ancients*[2] he has contrived to turn a crude myth into a subtle allegory in behalf of toleration.

Thus, despite his many resorts to and prostrations before the Scriptures, the general effect of his writings in this regard is to set up in the minds of his readers the old semi-rationalistic equivoque of a "two-fold truth"; reminding us as they do that he "did in the beginning separate the divine testimony from the human." When, therefore, he announces that "we know by faith" that "matter was created from nothing,"[3] he has the air of juggling with his problem; and his further suggestion as to the possibility of matter being endowed with a force of evolution, however cautiously put, is far removed from orthodoxy. Accordingly, the charge of atheism—which he notes as commonly brought against all who dwell solely on second causes[4]—was actually cast at his memory in the next generation.[5] It was of course false: on the issue of theism he is continually descanting with quite conventional unction; as in the familiar essay on atheism.[6] His dismissal of final causes as "barren" meant merely that the notion was barren of scientific result;[7] and he refers the question to metaphysic.[8] But if his theism was of a kind disturbing to believers in a controlling Providence, as little was it satisfactory to Christian fervour: and it can hardly be doubted that the main stream of his argument made for a non-Biblical deism, if not for atheism; his dogmatic orthodoxies being undermined by his own scientific teaching.

Lechler (*Gesch. des englischen Deismus*, pp. 23–25) notes that Bacon involuntarily made for deism. Cp. Amand Saintes, *Hist. de la philos. de Kant*, 1844, p. 69; and Kuno Fischer, *Francis Bacon*, Eng. tr. 1857, ch. xi, pp. 341–43. Dean Church (*Bacon*, in "Men of Letters" series, pp. 174, 205) insists that Bacon held by revelation and immortality; and can of course cite his profession of such belief, which is not to be disputed. (Cp. the careful judgment of Prof. Fowler in his *Bacon*, pp. 180–91, and his ed. of the *Novum Organum*, 1878, pp. 43–53.) But the tendency of the specific Baconian teaching is none the less to put these beliefs aside, and to overlay them with a naturalistic habit of mind. At the first remove from Bacon we have Hobbes.

[1] *De Augmentis*, ed. cited, p. 73.
[2] No. xviii, *Diomedes*. Ed. cited, p. 841.
[3] *De Principiis atque Originibus*, p. 664.
[4] *Nov. Org.* i. 89; *Filum Labyrinthi*, § 7; Essay 16.
[5] Francis Osborn, pref. to his "Miscellany," in *Works*, 7th ed. 1673.
[6] Cp. *Valerius Terminus*, ch. i.
[7] This is noted by Glassford in his tr. of the *Novum Organum* (1844, p. 26); and by Ellis in his and Spedding's edition of the *Works*. (Routledge ed. pp. 32, 473, *note*.)
[8] *De Augmentis*, bk. iii, ch. iv, *end*.

As regards his intellectual inconsistencies, we can but say that they are such as meet us in men's thinking at every new turn. Though we can see that Bacon's orthodoxy "doth protest too much," with an eye on king and commons and public opinion, we are not led to suppose that he had ever in his heart cast off his inherited creed. He shows frequent Christian prejudice in his references to pagans; and can write that "To seek to extinguish anger utterly is but the bravery of the Stoics,"[1] pretending that the Christian books are more accommodating, and ignoring the Sermon on the Mount. In arguing that the "religion of the heathen" set men upon ending "all inquisition of nature in metaphysical or theological discourse," and in charging the Turks with a special tendency to "ascribe ordinary effects to the immediate workings of God,"[2] he is playing not very scrupulously on the vanity of his co-religionists. As he was only too well aware, both tendencies ruled the Christian thought of his own day, and derive direct from the sacred books—not from "abuse," as he pretends. And on the metaphysical as on the common-sense side of his thought he is self-contradictory, even as most men have been before and since, because judgment cannot easily fulfil the precepts it frames for itself in illuminated hours. Latter-day students have been impressed, as was Leibnitz, by the original insight with which Bacon negated the possibility of our forming any concrete conception of a primary form of matter, and insisted on its necessary transcendence of our powers of knowledge.[3] On the same principle he should have negated every modal conception of the still more recondite Something which he put as antecedent to matter, and called God.[4] Yet in his normal thinking he seems to have been content with the commonplace formula given in his essay on Atheism—that we cannot suppose the totality of things to be "without a mind." He has here endorsed in its essentials what he elsewhere calls "the heresy of the Anthropomorphites,"[5] failing to apply his own law in his philosophy, as elsewhere in his physics. When, however, we realize that similar inconsistency is fallen into after him by Spinoza, and wholly escaped perhaps by no thinker, we are in a way to understand that with all his deflections from his own higher law Bacon may have profoundly and fruitfully influenced the thought of the next generation, if not that of his own.

The fact of this influence has been somewhat obscured by the

[1] Essay 57, *Of Anger*.
[2] *Valerius Terminus*, ch. xxv.
[3] *De Principiis*, ed. cited, pp. 648–49. Cp. pp. 642–43.
[4] *Id.* p. 648.
[5] *Valerius Terminus*, ch. ii; *De Augmentis*, bk. v, ch. iv. Ed. cited, pp. 199, 517.

modern dispute as to whether he had any important influence on scientific progress.[1] At first sight the old claim for him in that regard seems to be heavily discounted by the simple fact that he definitely rejected the Copernican system of astronomy.[2] Though, however, this gravely emphasizes his fallibility, it does not cancel his services as a stimulator of scientific thought. At that time only a few were yet intelligently convinced Copernicans; and we have the record of how, in Bacon's day, Harvey lost heavily in credit and in his medical practice by propounding his discovery of the circulation of the blood,[3] which, it is said, no physician over forty years old at that time believed in. For the scientific men of that century—and only among them did Copernicanism find the slightest acceptance—it was thus no fatal shortcoming in Bacon to have failed to grasp the true scheme of sidereal motion, any more than it was in Galileo to be wrong about the tides and comets. They could realize that it was precisely in astronomy, for lack of special study and expert knowledge, that Bacon was least qualified to judge. Intellectual influence on science is not necessarily dependent on actual scientific achievement, though that of course furthers and establishes it; and the fact of Bacon's impact on the mind of the next age is abundantly proved by testimonies.

For a time the explicit tributes came chiefly from abroad; though at all times, even in the first shock of his disgrace, there were Englishmen perfectly convinced of his greatness. To the winning of foreign favour he had specially addressed himself in his adversity. Grown wary in act as well as wise in theory, he deleted from the Latin *De Augmentis* a whole series of passages of the *Advancement of Learning* which disparaged Catholics and Catholicism;[4] and he had his reward in being appreciated by many Jesuit and other Catholic scholars.[5] But Protestants such as Comenius and Leibnitz were ere long more emphatic than any Catholics;[6] and at the time of the Restoration we find Bacon enthusiastically praised among the more open-minded and scientifically biassed thinkers of

[1] Cp. Brewster, *Life of Newton*, 1855, ii, 400–404; Draper, *Intel. Devel. of Europe*, ed. 1875, ii, 258–60; Dean Church, *Bacon*, pp. 180–201; Fowler, *Bacon*, ch. vi; Lodge, *Pioneers of Science*, pp. 145–51; Lange, *Gesch. d. Materialismus*, i, 197 *sq.* (Eng. tr. i, 236–37), and cit. from Liebig—as to whom, however, see Fowler, pp. 133, 157.

[2] *Novum Organum*, ii, 46 and 48, § 17; *De Aug.* iii. 4; *Thema Coeli*. Ed. cited, pp. 364, 375, 461, 705, 709. Whewell (*Hist. of Induct. Sciences*, 3rd ed. i, 296, 298) ignores the second and third of these passages in denying Hume's assertion that Bacon rejected the Copernican theory with "disdain." It is true, however, that Bacon had vacillated. The facts are fairly faced by Prof. Fowler in his *Bacon*, 1881, pp. 151–52, and his ed. of *Novum Organum*, Introd. pp. 30–36. See also the summing-up of Ellis in notes to passages above cited, and at p. 675.

[3] Aubrey, *Lives of Eminent Persons*, ed. 1813, vol. ii, pt. ii, p. 383.

[4] See notes in ed. cited, pp. 50, 53, 61, 63, 68, 75, 76, 84, 110.

[5] Fowler, ed. of *Nov. Org.* § 14, pp. 101–104.

[6] *Id.* § 14, p. 108; Ellis in ed. cited, p. 643.

England, who included some zealous Christians.[1] It was not that his special "method" enabled them to reach important results with any new facility; its impracticability is now insisted on by friends as well as foes.[2] It was that he arraigned with extraordinary psychological insight and brilliance of phrase the mental vices which had made discoveries so rare; the alternate self-complacency and despair of the average indolent mind; the "opinion of store" which was "cause of want"; the timid or superstitious evasion of research. In all this he was using his own highest powers, his comprehension of human character and his genius for speech. And though his own scientific results were not to be compared with those of Galileo and Descartes, the wonderful range of his observation and his curiosity, the unwearying zest of his scrutiny of well-nigh all the known fields of Nature, must have been an inspiration to multitudes of students besides those who have recorded their debt to him. It is probable that but for his literary genius, which though little discussed is of a very rare order, his influence would have been both narrower and less durable; but, being one of the great writers of the modern world, he has swayed men down till our own day.

Certain it is that alongside of his doctrine there persisted in England, apart from all printed utterance, a movement of deistic rationalism, of which the eighteenth century saw only the fuller development. Sir John Suckling (1609–1641), rewriting about 1637 his letter to the Earl of Dorset, *An Account of Religion by Reason*, tells how in a first sketch it "had like to have made me an Atheist at Court," and how "the fear of Socinianism at this time renders every man that offers to give an account of religion by reason, suspected to have none at all";[3] but he also mentions that he knows it "still to be the opinion of good wits that the particular religion of Christians has added little to the general religion of the world."[4] Himself a young man of talent, he offers quasi-rational reconciliations of faith with reason which can have satisfied no real doubter, and can hardly have failed to introduce doubt into the minds of some of his readers.

[1] Rawley's *Life*, in ed. cited, p. 9; Osborn, as above cited; Fowler, ed. of *Nov. Org.* Introd. § 14; T. Martin, *Character of Bacon*, 1835, pp. 216, 227, 222–23.

[2] Cp. Fowler, *Bacon*, pp. 139–41; Mill, *Logic*, bk. vi, ch. v, § 5; Jevons, *Princ. of Science*, 1-vol. ed. p. 576; Tyndall, *Scientific Use of the Imagination*, 3rd ed. pp. 4, 8–9, 42–43; T. Martin, as cited, pp. 210–38; Bagehot, *Postulates of Eng. Polit. Econ.* ed. 1885, pp. 18–19; Ellis and Spedding, in ed. cited, pp. x, xii, 22, 389. The notion of a dialectic method which should mechanically enable any man to make discoveries is an irredeemable fallacy, and must be abandoned. Bacon's own remarkable anticipation of modern scientific thought in the formula that heat is a mode of motion (*Nov. Org.* ii, 20) is not mechanically yielded by his own process, noteworthy and suggestive though that is.

[3] Pref. Epistle. [4] Works, ed. Dublin, 1766, p. 159; ed. 1910, p. 344.

§ 5. *Popular Thought in Europe*

Of popular freethought in the rest of Europe there is little to chronicle for a hundred and fifty years after the Reformation. The epoch-making work of COPERNICUS, published in 1543, had little or no immediate effect in Germany, where, as we have seen, physical and verbal strifes had begun with the ecclesiastical revolution, and were to continue to waste the nation's energy for a century. In 1546, all attempts at ecclesiastical reconciliation having failed, the emperor Charles V, in whom Melanchthon had seen a model monarch,[1] decided to put down the Protestant heresy by war. Luther had just died, apprehensive for his cause. Civil war now raged till the peace of Augsburg in 1555; whereafter Charles abdicated in favour of his son Philip. Here were in part the conditions which in France and elsewhere were later followed by a growth of rational unbelief; and there are some traces even at this time of partial skepticism in high places in the German world, notably in the case of the Emperor Maximilian II, who, "grown up in the spirit of doubt,"[2] would never identify himself with either Protestants or Catholics.[3] But in Germany there was still too little intellectual light, too little brooding over experience, to permit of the spread of such a temper; and the balance of forces amounted only to a deadlock between the ecclesiastical parties. Protestantism on the intellectual side, as already noted, had sunk into a bitter and barren polemic[4] among the reformers themselves; and many who had joined the movement reverted to Catholicism.[5] Meanwhile the teaching and preaching Jesuits were zealously at work, turning the dissensions of the enemy to account, and contrasting its schism upon schism with the unity of the Church. But Protestantism was well welded to the financial interest of the many princes and others who had acquired the Church lands confiscated at the Reformation; since a return to Catholicism would mean the surrender of these.[6] Thus there wrought on the one side the organized spirit of anti-heresy[7] and on the other the organized spirit of Bibliolatry, neither gaining ground; and between the two, intellectual life was paralysed. Protestantism saw no way of advance; and the prevailing temper began to be that

[1] Kohlrausch, *Hist. of Germany*, Eng. tr. p. 385.
[2] Moritz Ritter, *Geschichte der deutschen Union*, 1867–73, ii, 55.
[3] Menzel, *Geschichte der Deutschen*, 3te Aufl. Cap. 416.
[4] Cp. Gardiner, *Thirty Years' War*, pp. 12–13; Kohlrausch, p. 438; Pusey, *Histor. Enq. into Ger. Rationalism*, pp. 9–25; Henderson, *Short Hist. of Germany*, i, ch. xvi.
[5] Kohlrausch, p. 439. A specially strong reaction set in about 1573. Ritter, *Geschichte der deutschen Union*, i, 19. Cp. Menzel, Cap. 433.
[6] Cp. Gardiner, *Thirty Years' War*, pp. 16, 18, 21; Kohlrausch, p. 370.
[7] As to this see Moritz Ritter, as cited, i, 9, 27; ii, 122 *sq.*; Dunham, *Hist. of the Germanic Empire*, iii, 186; Henderson, i, 411 *sq.*

of the Dark Ages, expectant of the end of the world.[1] Superstition abounded, especially the belief in witchcraft, now acted on with frightful cruelty throughout the whole Christian world;[2] and in the nature of the case Catholicism counted for nothing on the opposite side.

The only element of rationalism that one historian of culture can detect is the tendency of the German moralists of the time to turn the devil into an abstraction by identifying him with the different aspects of human folly and vice.[3] There was, as a matter of fact, a somewhat higher manifestation of the spirit of reason in the shape of some new protests against the superstition of sorcery. About 1560 a Catholic priest named Cornelius Loos Callidius was imprisoned by a papal nuncio for declaring that witches' confessions were merely the results of torture. Forced to retract, he was released; but again offended, and was again imprisoned, dying in time to escape the fate of a councillor of Trèves, named Flade, who was burned alive for arguing, on the basis of an old canon (mistakenly named from the Council of Ancyra), that sorcery is an imaginary crime.[4] Such an infamy explains a great deal of the stagnation of many Christian generations. But courage was not extinct; and in 1563 there appeared the famous John Wier's treatise on witchcraft,[5] a work which, though fully adhering to the belief in the devil and things demoniac, argued against the notion that witches were conscious workers of evil. Wier[6] was a physician, and saw the problem partly as one in pathology. Other laymen, and even priests, as we have seen, had reacted still more strongly against the prevailing insanity; but it had the authority of Luther on its side, and with the common people the earlier protests counted for little.

Reactions against Protestant bigotry in Holland on other lines were not much more successful, and indeed were not numerous. One of the most interesting is that of DIRK COORNHERT (1522–1590), who by his manifold literary activities[7] became one of the founders of Dutch prose. In his youth Coornhert had visited Spain

[1] Freytag, *Bilder aus d. deutschen Vergangenheit*, Bd. ii, 1883, p. 381; Bd. iii, *ad init.*
[2] Cp. Lecky, *Rationalism in Europe*, i, 53–83.
[3] Freytag, *Bilder*, Bd. ii, Abth. ii, p. 378.
[4] *The Pope and the Council*, Eng. tr. p. 260; French tr. p. 285.
[5] *De Praestigiis Daemonum*, 1563. See it described by Lecky, *Rationalism*, i, 85–87; Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, ii, 76.
[6] By Dutch historians Wier is claimed as a Dutchman. He was born at Grave, in North Brabant, but studied medicine at Paris and Orleans, and after practising physic at Arnheim in the Netherlands was called to Düsseldorf as physician to the Duke of Jülich, to whom he dedicated his treatise. His ideas are probably traceable to his studies in France.
[7] His collected works (1632) amount to nearly 7,000 folio pages. J. Ten Brink, *Kleine Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Letteren*, 1882, p. 91.

and Portugal, and had there, it is said, seen an execution of victims of the Inquisition,[1] deriving thence the aversion to intolerance which stamped his whole life's work. It does not appear, however, that any such peninsular experience was required, seeing that the Dutch Inquisition became abundantly active about the same period. Learning Latin at thirty, in order to read Augustine, he became a translator of Cicero and—singularly enough—of Boccaccio. An engraver to trade, he became first notary and later secretary to the burgomaster of Haarlem; and, failing to steer clear of the strifes of the time, was arrested and imprisoned at the Hague in 1567. On his release he sought safety at Kleef in Santen, whence he returned after the capture of Brill to become secretary of the new national Government at Haarlem; but he had again to take to flight, and lived at Kleef from 1572 to 1577. In 1578 he debated at Leyden with two preachers of Delft on predestination, which he declared to be unscriptural; and was officially ordered to keep silence. Thereupon he published a protest, and got into fresh trouble by drawing up, as notary, an appeal to the Prince of Orange on behalf of his Catholic fellow-countrymen for freedom of worship, and by holding another debate at the Hague.[2] Always his master-ideal was that of toleration, in support of which he wrote strongly against Beza and Calvin (this in a Latin treatise published only after his death), declaring the persecution of heretics to be a crime in the kingdom of God; and it was as a moralist that he gave the lead to Arminius on the question of predestination.[3] "Against Protestant and Catholic sacerdotalism and scholastic he set forth humanist world-wisdom and Biblical ethic,"[4] to that end publishing a translation of Boëthius (1585), and composing his chief work on *Zedekunst* (Ethics). Christianity, he insisted, lay not in profession or creed, but in practice. By way of restraining the ever-increasing malignity of theological strifes, he made the quaint proposal that the clergy should not be allowed to utter anything but the actual words of the Scriptures, and that all works of theology should be sequestrated. For these and other heteroclite suggestions he was expelled from Delft (where he sought finally to settle, 1587) by the magistrates, at the instance of the preachers, but was allowed to die in peace at Gouda, where he wrote to the last.[5]

All the while, though he drew for doctrine on Plutarch, Cicero,

[1] Ten Brink, p. 86. Jonckbloet (*Beknopte Geschiedenis der Nederl. Letterkunde*, ed. 1880, p. 148) is less specific.
[2] Ten Brink, pp. 89-90. [3] Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, ii, 83. [4] Ten Brink, p. 87.
[5] Jonckbloet, *Beknopte Geschiedenis*, p. 149; Ten Brink, p. 91; Bayle, *Dictionnaire*, art. Koornhert; Pünjer, *Hist. of the Chr. Philos. of Religion*, Eng. tr. p. 269; Dr. E. Gosse, art. on Dutch Literature in *Encyc. Brit.* 9th ed. xii, 93.

Seneca, and Marcus Aurelius equally with the Bible, Coornhert habitually founded on the latter as the final authority.[1] On no other footing could any one in his age and country stand as a teacher. It was not till after generations of furious intolerance that a larger outlook was possible in the Netherlands; and the first steps towards it were naturally taken independently of theology. Although Grotius figured for a century as one of the chief exponents of Christian evidences, it is certain that his great work on the Law of War and Peace (1625) made for a rationalistic conception of society. "Modern historians of jurisprudence, like Lerminier and Bluntschli, represent it as the distinctive merit of Grotius that he freed the science from bondage to theology."[2] The breach, indeed, is not direct, as theistic sanctions are paraded in the Prolegomena; but along with these goes the avowal that natural ethic would be valid even were there no God, and—as against the formula of Horace, *Utilitas justi mater* —that "the mother of natural right is human nature itself."[3]

Where Grotius, defender of the faith, figured as a heretic, unbelief could not speak out, though there are traces of its underground life. The charge of atheism was brought against the *Excercitationes Philosophicæ* of Gorlæus, published in 1620; but, the book being posthumous, conclusions could not be tried. Views far short of atheism, however, were dangerous to their holders; for the merely Socinian work of Voelkel, published at Amsterdam in 1642, was burned by order of the authorities, and a second impression shared the same fate.[4] In 1653 the States of Holland forbade the publication of all Unitarian books and all Socinian worship; and though the veto as to books was soon evaded, that on worship was enforced.[5] Still, Holland was relatively tolerant as beside other countries; and when the Unitarian physician Daniel Zwicker (1612–1678), of Dantzig, found his own country too hot to hold him, he came to Holland (about 1652) "for security and convenience."[6] He was able to publish at Amsterdam in 1658 his Latin *Irenicum Irenicorum*, wherein he lays down three principles for the settlement of Christian difficulties, the first being "the universal reason of mankind," while Scripture and tradition hold only the second and third places. His book is a remarkable investigation of the rise of the doctrines of the *Logos* and the Trinity, which he traced to polytheism, making out that the first Christians, whom he identified with the Nazarenes, regarded Jesus

[1] Ten Brink, p. 91.
[2] Flint, *Vico*, p. 142.
[3] *De Jure Belli et Pacis*, proleg. §§ 11, 16.
[4] Bayle, art. VOELKEL.
[5] Schlegel's note on Mosheim, Reid's ed. p. 862.
[6] Nelson, *Life of Bishop Bull*, 2nd ed. 1714, p. 392.

as a man. The book evoked many answers, and it is somewhat surprising that Zwicker escaped serious persecution, dying peacefully in Amsterdam in 1678, whereas writers much less pronounced in their heresy incurred aggressive hostility. Descartes, as we shall see, during his stay in Holland was menaced by clerical fanaticism. Some fared worse. In the generation after Grotius, one Koerbagh, a doctor, for publishing (1668) a dictionary of definitions containing advanced ideas, had to fly from Amsterdam. At Culenberg he translated a Unitarian work and began another; but was betrayed, tried for blasphemy, and sentenced to ten years' imprisonment, to be followed by ten years' banishment. He compromised by dying in prison within the year. Even as late as 1678 the juri-consult Hadrian Beverland (afterwards appointed, through Isaac Vossius, to a lay office under the Church of England) was imprisoned and struck off the rolls of Leyden University for his *Peccatum Originale*, in which he speculated erotically as to the nature of the sin of Adam and Eve. The book was furiously answered, and publicly burned.[1] It was only after an age of such intolerance that Holland, at the end of the seventeenth century, began to become for England a model of freedom in opinion, as formerly in trade. And it seems to have been through Holland, in the latter part of the seventeenth century, that there came the fresh Unitarian impulse which led to the considerable spread of the movement in England after the Revolution of 1688.[2]

Unitarianism, which we have seen thus invading Holland somewhat persistently during half a century, was then as now impotent beyond a certain point by reason of its divided allegiance, though it has always had the support of some good minds. Its denial of the deity of Jesus could not be made out without a certain superposing of reason on Scripture; and yet to Scripture it always finally appealed. The majority of men accepting such authority have always tended to believe more uncritically; and the majority of men who are habitually critical will always repudiate the Scriptural jurisdiction. In Poland, accordingly, the movement, so flourishing in its earlier years, was soon arrested, as we have seen, by the perception that it drove many Protestants back to Catholicism; among these being presumably a number whose critical insight showed them that there was no firm standing-ground between Catholicism and Naturalism. Every new advance within the Unitarian pale

[1] Nicéron, *Mémoires pour servir*, etc., xiv (1731), 340 *sq.* One of the replies is the *Justa Detestatio sceleratissimi libelli Adriani Beverlandi De Peccato Originali*, by Leonard Ryssen, 1680. A *very* free version of Beverland's book appeared in French in 1714 under the title *Etat de l'Homme dans le Peché Originel*. It reached a sixth edition in 1741.

[2] Nelson, *Life of Bishop Bull*, as cited, p. 280.

terrified the main body, many of whom were mere Arians, holding by the term Trinity, and merely making the Son subordinate to the Father. Thus when one of their most learned ministers, Simon Budny, followed in the steps of Ferencz Davides (whom we have seen dying in prison in Transylvania in 1579), and represented Jesus as a "mere" man, he was condemned by a synod (1582) and deposed from his office (1584). He recanted, and was reinstated,[1] but his adherents seem to have been excommunicated. The sect thus formed were termed Semi-Judaizers by another heretic, Martin Czechowicz, who himself denied the pre-existence of Jesus, and made him only a species of demi-god;[2] yet Fausto Sozzini, better known as Faustus Socinus, who also wrote against them, and who had worked with Biandrata to have Davides imprisoned, conceded that prayer to Christ was optional.[3]

Faustus, who arrived in Poland in 1579, seems to have been moved to his strenuously "moderate" policy, which for a time unified the bulk of the party, mainly by a desire to keep on tolerable terms with Protestantism. That, however, did not serve him with the Catholics; and when the reaction set in he suffered severely at their hands. His treatise, *De Jesu Christu Servatore*, created bitter resentment; and in 1598 the Catholic rabble of Cracow, led "as usual by the students of the university," dragged him from his house. His life was saved only by the strenuous efforts of the rector and two professors of the university; and his library was destroyed, with his manuscripts, whereof "he particularly regretted a treatise which he had composed against the atheists";[4] though it is not recorded that the atheists had ever menaced either his life or his property. He seems to have been zealous against all heresy that outwent his own, preaching passive obedience in politics as emphatically as any churchman, and condemning alike the rising of the Dutch against Spanish rule and the resistance of the French Protestants to their king.[5]

This attitude may have had something to do with the better side of the ethical doctrines of the sect, which leant considerably to non-resistance. Czechowicz (who was deposed by his fellow-Socinians for schism) seems not only to have preached a patient endurance of injuries, but to have meant it;[6] and to the Socinian sect belongs the

[1] Krasinski, *Ref. in Poland*, 1840, ii, 363; Mosheim, 16 Cent. sec. iii, pt. ii, ch. iv, § 22. Budny translated the Bible, with rationalistic notes. [2] Krasinski, p. 361.
[3] Mosheim, last cit. § 23, note 4.
[4] Krasinski, p. 367; Wallace, *Antitrin. Biog.* 1850, ii, 320.
[5] Bayle, art. FAUSTE SOCIN. Krasinski, p. 374.
[6] Krasinski, pp. 361–62. Fausto Sozzini also could apparently forgive everybody save those who believed less than he did.

main credit of setting up a humane compromise on the doctrine of eternal punishment.[1] The time, of course, had not come for any favourable reception of such a compromise in Christendom; and it is noted of the German Socinian, Ernst Schoner (Sonerus), who wrote against the orthodox dogma, that his works are "exceedingly scarce."[2] Unitarianism as a whole, indeed, made little headway outside of Poland and Transylvania.

In Spain, meantime, there was no recovery from the paralysis wrought by the combined tyranny of Church and Crown, incarnate in the Inquisition. The monstrous multiplication of her clergy might alone have sufficed to set up stagnation in her mental life; but, not content with the turning of a vast multitude[3] of men and women away from the ordinary work of life, her rulers set themselves to expatriate as many more on the score of heresy. A century after the expulsion of the Jews came the turn of the Moors, whose last hold in Spain, Granada, had been overthrown in 1492. Within a generation they had been deprived of all exterior practice of their religion;[4] but that did not suffice, and the Inquisition never left them alone. Harried, persecuted, compulsorily baptized, deprived of their Arabic books, they repeatedly revolted, only to be beaten down. At length, in the opening years of the seventeenth century (1610–1613), under Philip III, on the score that the great Armada had failed because heretics were tolerated at home, it was decided to expel the whole race; and now a million Moriscoes, among the most industrious inhabitants of Spain, were driven the way of the Jews. It is needless here to recall the ruinous effect upon the material life of Spain:[5] the aspect of the matter which specially concerns us is the consummation of the policy of killing out all intellectual variation. The Moriscoes may have counted for little in positive culture; but they were one of the last and most important factors of variation in the country; and when Spain was thus successively denuded of precisely the most original and energetic types among the Jewish, the Spanish, and the Moorish stocks, her mental arrest was complete.

To modern freethought, accordingly, she has till our own age

[1] Cp. the inquiry as to Locke's Socinianism in J. Milner's *Account of Mr. Lock's Religion out of his own Writings*, 1706, and Lessing's *Zur Geschichte und Literatur*, i, as to Leibnitz's criticism of Sonerus.

[2] Enfield's *History of Philosophy* (an abstract of Brucker), ed. 1840, p. 537.

[3] In the dominions of Philip II there are said to have been 58 archbishops, 684 bishops, 11,400 abbeys, 23,000 religious fraternities, 46,000 monasteries, 13,500 nunneries, 312,000 secular priests, 400,000 monks, 200,000 friars and other ecclesiastics. H. E. Watts, *Miguel de Cervantes*, 1895, pp. 67–68. Spain alone had 9,088 monasteries.

[4] Buckle, 3-vol. ed. ii, 484; 1-vol. ed. p. 564, and refs.

[5] Cp. Buckle, 3-vol. ed. ii, 497–99; 1-vol. ed. pp. 572–73; La Rigaudière, *Hist. des Persèc. Relig. en Espagne*, 1860, pp. 226–26.

contributed practically nothing. Huarte seems to have had no Spanish successors. The brilliant dramatic literature of the reigns of the three Philips, which influenced the rising drama alike of France and England, is notably unintellectual,[1] dealing endlessly in plot and adventure, but yielding no great study of character, and certainly doing nothing to further ethics. Calderon was a thorough fanatic, and became a priest;[2] Lope de Vega found solace under bereavement in zealously performing the duties of an Inquisitor; and was so utterly swayed by the atrocious creed of persecution which was blighting Spain that he joined in the general exultation over the expulsion of the Moriscoes. Even the mind of Cervantes had not on this side deepened beyond the average of his race and time;[3] his old wrongs at Moorish hands perhaps warping his better judgment. His humorous and otherwise kindly spirit, so incongruously neighboured, must indeed have counted for much in keeping life sweet in Spain in the succeeding centuries of bigotry and ignorance. But from the seventeenth century till the other day the brains were out, in the sense that genius was lacking. That species of variation had been too effectually extirpated during two centuries to assert itself until after a similar duration of normal conditions. The "immense advantage of religious unity," which even a modern Spanish historian[4] has described as a gain balancing the economic loss from the expulsion of the Moriscoes, was precisely the condition of minimum intellectual activity—the unity of stagnation. No kind of ratiocinative thought was allowed to raise its head. A Latin translation of the *Hypotyposes* of Sextus Empiricus had been permitted, or at least published, in Catholic France; but when Martin Martinez de Cantatapiedra, a learned orientalist and professor of theology, ventured to do the same thing in Spain—doubtless with the idea of promoting faith by discouraging reason—he was haled before the Inquisition, and the book proscribed (1583). He was further charged with Lutheran leanings on the score that he had a preference for the actual text of Scripture over that of the commentators.[5] In such an atmosphere it was natural that works on mathematics, astronomy, and physics should be censured as "favouring materialism and sometimes atheism."[6] It

[1] Cp. Lewes, *Spanish Drama, passim.*

[2] "He inspires me only with horror for the faith which he professes. No one ever so far disfigured Christianity; no one ever assigned to it passions so ferocious, or morals so corrupt" (Sismondi, *Lit. of South of Europe*, Bohn tr. ii, 379).

[3] Ticknor, *Hist. of Spanish Lit.* 6th ed. ii, 501; *Don Quixote*, pt. ii, ch. liv; Ormsby, tr. of *Don Quixote*, 1885, introd. i, 58.

[4] Lafuente, *Historia de Espana*, 1856, xvii, 340. It is not quite certain that Lafuente expressed his sincere opinion.

[5] Llorente, ii, 433.

[6] *Id.* p. 420.

has been held by one historian that at the death of Philip II there arose some such sense of relief throughout Spain as was felt later in France at the death of Louis XIV; that "the Spaniards now ventured to sport with the chains which they had not the power to break"; and that Cervantes profited by the change in conceiving and writing his Don Quixote.[1] But the same historian had before seen that "poetic freedom was circumscribed by the same shackles which fettered moral liberty. Thoughts which could not be expressed without fear of the dungeon and the stake were no longer materials for the poet to work on. His imagination, instead of improving them into poetic ideas.....had to be taught to reject them. But the eloquence of prose was more completely bowed down under the inquisitorial yoke than poetry, because it was more closely allied to truth, which of all things was the most dreaded."[2] Cervantes, Lope de Vega, and Calderon proved that within the iron wall of Catholic orthodoxy, in an age when conclusions were but slowly being tried between dogma and reason, there could be a vigorous play of imaginative genius on the field of human nature; even as in Velasquez, sheltered by royal favour, the genius of colour and portraiture could become incarnate. But after these have passed away, the laws of social progress are revealed in the defect of all further Spanish genius. Even of Cervantes it is recorded—on very doubtful authority, however—that he said "I could have made Don Quixote much more amusing if it were not for the Inquisition"; and it is matter of history that a passage in his book[3] disparaging perfunctory works of charity was in 1619 ordered by the Holy Office to be expunged as impious and contrary to the faith.

See H. E. Watts, *Miguel de Cervantes*, p. 167. *Don Quixote* was "always under suspicion of the orthodox." *Id.* p. 166. Mr. Watts, saying nothing of Cervantes's approval of the expulsion of the Moriscoes, claims that his "head was clear of the follies and extravagances of the reigning superstition" (*id.* p. 231). But the case is truly summed up by Mr. Ormsby when he says: "For one passage capable of being tortured into covert satire" against things ecclesiastical, "there are ten in *Don Quixote* and the novels that show—what indeed is very obvious from the little we know of his life and character—that Cervantes was a faithful son of the Church" (tr. of *Don Quixote*, 1885, introd. i, 57).

When the total intellectual life of a nation falls ever further in the rear of the world's movement, even the imaginative arts are

[1] Bouterwek, *Hist. of Spanish and Portuguese Literature*, Eng. tr. 1823, i, 331.
[2] *Id.* p. 151.
[3] Part II, ch. xxxvi.

stunted. Turkey excepted, the civilized nations of Europe which for two centuries have contributed the fewest great names to the world's bead-roll have been Spain, Austria, Portugal, Belgium, and Greece, all noted for their "religious unity." And of all of these Spain is the supreme instance of positive decadence, she having exhibited in the first half of the sixteenth century a greater complex of energy than any of the others.[1] The lesson is monumental.

§ 6. *Scientific Thought*

It remains to trace briefly the movement of scientific and speculative thought which constituted the transition between the Scholastic and the modern philosophy. It may be compendiously noted under the names of Copernicus, Bruno, Vanini, Galileo, Ramus, Gassendi, Bacon, and Descartes.

The great performance of COPERNICUS (Nicolaus Koppernigk, 1473–1543), given to the world with an editor's treacherous preface as he lay paralysed on his deathbed, did not become a general possession for over a hundred years. The long reluctance of its author to let it be published, despite the express invitation of a cardinal in the name of the pope, was well founded in his knowledge of the strength of common prejudice; and perhaps partly in a sense of the scientific imperfection of his own case.[2] Only the special favour accorded to his first sketch at Rome—a favour which he had further carefully planned for in his dedicatory epistle to Pope Paul—saved his main treatise from prohibition till long after its work was done.[3] It was in fact, with all its burden of traditional error, the most momentous challenge that had yet been offered in the modern world to established beliefs, alike theological and lay, for it seemed to flout "common sense" as completely as it did the cosmogony of the sacred books. It was probably from scraps of ancient lore current in Italy in his years of youthful study there that he first derived his idea; and in Italy none had dared publicly to propound the geocentric theory. Its gradual victory, therefore, is the first great modern instance of a triumph of reason over spontaneous and

[1] Bouterwek, whose sociology, though meritorious, is ill-clarified, argues that the Inquisition was in a manner congenital to Spain because before its establishment the suspicion of heresy was already "more degrading in Spain than the most odious crimes in other countries." But the same might have been said of the other countries also. As to earlier Spanish heresy see above, vol. i, p. 337 *sq.*

[2] Despite the many fallacies retained by Copernicus from the current astronomy, he must be pronounced an exceptionally scientific spirit. Trained as a mathematician, astronomer, and physician, he showed a keen and competent interest in the practical problem of currency; and one of the two treatises which alone he published of his own accord was a sound scheme for the rectification of that of his own government. Though a canon of Frauenburg, he never took orders; but did manifold and unselfish secular service.

[3] It was shielded by thirteen popes—from Paul III to Paul V.

instilled prejudice; and Galileo's account of his reception of it should be a classic document in the history of rationalism.

It was when he was a student in his teens that there came to Pisa one Christianus Urstitius of Rostock, a follower of Copernicus, to lecture on the new doctrine. The young Galileo, being satisfied that "that opinion could be no other than a solemn madness," did not attend; and those of his acquaintance who did made a jest of the matter, all save one, "very intelligent and wary," who told him that "the business was not altogether to be laughed at." Thenceforth he began to inquire of Copernicans, with the result inevitable to such a mind as his. "Of as many as I examined I found not so much as one who told me not that he had been a long time of the contrary opinion, but to have changed it for this, as convinced by the strength of the reasons proving the same; and afterwards questioning them one by one, to see whether they were well possessed of the reasons of the other side, I found them all to be very ready and perfect in them, so that I could not truly say that they took this opinion out of ignorance, vanity, or to show the acuteness of their wits." On the other hand, the opposing Aristoteleans and Ptolemeans had seldom even superficially studied the Copernican system, and had in no case been converted from it. "Whereupon, considering that there was no man who followed the opinion of Copernicus that had not been first on the contrary side, and that was not very well acquainted with the reasons of Aristotle and Ptolemy, while, on the contrary, there was not one of the followers of Ptolemy that had ever been of the judgment of Copernicus, and had left that to embrace this of Aristotle," he began to realize how strong must be the reasons that thus drew men away from beliefs "imbibed with their milk."[1] We can divine how slow would be the progress of a doctrine which could only thus begin to find its way into one of the most gifted scientific minds of the modern world. It was only a minority of the *élite* of the intellectual life who could receive it, even after the lapse of a hundred years.

The doctrine of the earth's two-fold motion, as we have seen, had actually been taught in the fifteenth century by Nicolaus of Cusa (1401–1464), who, instead of being prosecuted, was made a cardinal, so little was the question then considered (Ueberweg, ii, 23–24). See above, vol. i, p. 368, as to Pulci. Only very slowly did the work even of Copernicus make its impression. Green (*Short History*, ed. 1881, p. 297) makes

[1] Galileo, *Dialogi dei due massimi sistemi del mondo*, ii (*Opere*, ed. 1811, xi, 303–304).

first the mistake of stating that it influenced thought in the *fifteenth* century, and then the further mistake of saying that it was brought home to the general intelligence by Galileo and Kepler in the later years of the *sixteenth* century (*id.* p. 412). Galileo's European notoriety dates from 1616; his *Dialogues of the Two Systems of the World* appeared only in 1632; and his *Dialogues of the New Sciences* in 1638. Kepler's indecisive *Mysterium Cosmographicum* appeared only in 1597; his treatise on the motions of the planet Mars not till 1609.

One of the first to bring the new cosmological conception to bear on philosophic thought was GIORDANO BRUNO of Nola (1548–1600), whose life and death of lonely chivalry have won him his place as the typical martyr of modern freethought.[1] He may be conceived as a blending of the pantheistic and naturalistic lore of ancient Greece,[2] assimilated through the Florentine Platonists, with the spirit of modern science (itself a revival of the Greek) as it first takes firm form in Copernicus, whose doctrine Bruno early and ardently embraced. Baptized Filippo, he took Giordano as his cloister-name when he entered the great convent of S. Domenico Maggiore at Naples in 1563, in his fifteenth year. No human being was ever more unfitly placed among the Dominicans, punningly named the "hounds of the Lord" (*domini canes*) for their work as the corps of the Inquisition; and very early in his cloister life he came near being formally proceeded against for showing disregard of sacred images, and making light of the sanctity of the Virgin.[3] He passed his novitiate, however, without further trouble, and was fully ordained a priest in 1572, in his twenty-fourth year. Passing then through several Neapolitan monasteries during a period of three years, he seems to have become not a little of a freethinker on his return to his first cloister, as he had already reached Arian opinions in regard

[1] A good study of Bruno is supplied by Owen in his *Skeptics of the Italian Renaissance*. He has, however, omitted to embody the later discoveries of Dufour and Berti, and has some wrong dates. The *Life of Giordano Bruno*, by I. Frith (Mrs. Oppenheim), 1887, gives all the data, but is inadequate on the philosophic side. A competent estimate is given in the late Prof. Adamson's lectures on *The Development of Modern Philosophy*, etc., 1903, ii, 23 *sq.*; also in his art. in *Encyc. Brit.* For a hostile view see Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, ii, 105–111. The biography of Bartholmèss, *Jordano Bruno*, 1846, is extremely full and sympathetic, but was unavoidably loose as to dates. Much new matter has since been collected, for which see the *Vita di Giordano Bruno* of Domenico Berti, rev. and enlarged ed. 1889; Prof. J. L. McIntyre, *Giordano Bruno*, 1903; Dufour, *Giordano Bruno à Génève: Documents Inédits*, 1884; David Levi, *Giordano Bruno, o la religione del pensiero: l'uomo, l'apostolo e il martire*, 1887; Dr. H. Brunnhofer's *Giordano Bruno's Weltanschauung und Verhängniss*, 1882; and the doctoral treatise of C. Sigwart, *Die Lebensgeschichte Giordano Brunos*, Tübingen, 1880. For other authorities see Owen's and I. Frith's lists, and the final *Literaturnachweis* in Gustav Louis's *Giordano Bruno, seine Weltanschauung und Lebensverfassung*, Berlin, 1900. The study of Bruno has been carried further in Germany than in England; but Mr. Whittaker (*Essays and Notices*, 1895) and Prof. McIntyre make up much leeway.

[2] Cp. Bartholmèss, i, 49–53; Lange, *Gesch. des Materialismus*, i, 191–94 (Eng. tr. i, 232); Gustav Louis, as cited, pp. 11, 88.

[3] Berti, *Vita di Giordano Bruno*, 1889, pp. 40–41, 420. Bruno gives the facts in his own narrative before the Inquisitors at Venice.

to Christ, and soon proceeded to substitute a mystical and Pythagorean for the orthodox view of the Trinity.[1]

For the second time a "process" was begun against him, and he took flight to Rome (1576), presenting himself at a convent of his Order. News speedily came from Naples of the process against him, and of the discovery that he had possessed a volume of the works of Chrysostom and Jerome with the scholia of Erasmus—a prohibited thing. Only a few months before Bartolomeo Carranza, Bishop of Toledo, who had won the praise of the Council of Trent for his index of prohibited books, had been condemned to abjure for the doctrine that "the worship of the relics of the saints is of human institution," and had died in the same year at the convent to which Bruno had now gone. Thus doubly warned, he threw off his priestly habit, and fled to the Genoese territory,[2] where, in the commune of Noli, he taught grammar and astronomy. In 1578 he visited successively Turin, Venice, Padua, Bergamo, and Milan, resuming at the last-named town his monk's habit. Thereafter he again returned to Turin, passing thence to Chambéry at the end of 1578, and thence to Geneva early in 1579.[3] His wish, he said, was "to live in liberty and security"; but for that he must first renounce his Dominican habit; other Italian refugees, of whom there were many at Geneva, helping him to a layman's suit. Becoming a corrector of the press, he seems to have conformed externally to Calvinism; but after a stay of two and a-half months he published a short diatribe against one Antonio de La Faye, who professed philosophy at the Academy; and for this he was arrested and sentenced to excommunication, while his bookseller was subjected to one day's imprisonment and a fine.[4] After three weeks the excommunication was raised; but he nevertheless left Geneva, and afterwards spoke of Calvinism as the "*de*formed religion." After a few weeks' sojourn at Lyons he went to Toulouse, the very centre of inquisitional orthodoxy; and there, strangely enough, he was able to stay for more than a year,[5] taking his degree as Master of Arts and becoming professor of astronomy. But the civil wars made Toulouse unsafe; and at length, probably in 1581 or 1582, he reached Paris, where for a time he lectured as professor extraordinary.[6] In 1583 he reached England, where he remained till

[1] Berti, pp. 42–43, 47; Owen, p. 265.
[2] Not to Genoa, as Berti stated in his first ed. See ed. 1889, pp. 54, 392.
[3] Berti, p. 65. Owen has the uncorrected date, 1576.
[4] Dufour, *Giordano Bruno à Genève: Documents Inédits*, 1884; Berti, pp. 95–97; Gustav Louis, *Giordano Bruno*, pp. 73–75. Owen (p. 269) has overlooked these facts, set forth by Dufour in 1884. The documents are given in full in Frith, *Life*, 1887, p. 60 *sq.*
[5] The dates are in doubt. Cp. Berti, p. 115, and Frith, p. 65.
[6] See his own narrative before the Inquisitors in 1592. Berti, p. 394.

1585, lecturing, debating at Oxford on the Copernican theory, and publishing a number of his works, four of them dedicated to his patron Castelnau de Mauvissière, the French ambassador. Oxford was then a stronghold of bigoted Aristotelianism, where bachelors and masters deviating from *the* master were fined, or, if openly hostile, expelled.[1] In that camp Bruno was not welcome. But he had other shelter, at the French Embassy in London, and there he had notable acquaintances. He had met Sir Philip Sidney at Milan in 1578; and his dialogue, *Cena de le Ceneri*, gives a vivid account of a discussion in which he took a leading part at a banquet given by Sir Fulke Greville. His picture of "Oxford ignorance and English ill-manners"[2] is not lenient; and there is no reason to suppose that his doctrine was then assimilated by many;[3] but his stay in the household of Castelnau was one of the happiest periods of his chequered life. While in England he wrote no fewer than seven works, four of them dedicated to Castelnau, and two—the *Heroic Fervours* and the *Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast*—to Sir Philip Sidney.

Returning to Paris on the recall of Castelnau in 1585, he made an attempt to reconcile himself to the Church, but it was fruitless; and thereafter he went his own way. After a public disputation at the university in 1586, he set out on a new peregrination, visiting first Mayence, Marburg, and Wittemberg. At Marburg he was refused leave to debate; and at Wittemberg he seems to have been carefully conciliatory, as he not only matriculated but taught for over a year (1586–1588), till the Calvinist party carried the day over the Lutheran.[4] Thereafter he reached Prague, Helmstadt, Frankfort, and Zurich. At length, on the fatal invitation of the Venetian youth Mocenigo, he re-entered Italian territory, where, in Venice, he was betrayed to the Inquisition by his treacherous and worthless pupil.[5]

What had been done for freethought by Bruno in his fourteen years of wandering, debating, and teaching through Europe it is impossible to estimate; but it is safe to say that he was one of the most powerful antagonists to orthodox unreason that had yet

[1] McIntyre, *Giordano Bruno*, 1907, pp. 21–22.
[2] Frith, *Life*, p. 121, and refs.; Owen, p. 275; Bartholmèss, *Jordano Bruno*, i, 136–38.
[3] Cp. Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, ii, 111, *note*. As to Bruno's supposed influence on Bacon and Shakespeare, cp. Bartholmèss, i, 134–35; Frith, *Life*, pp. 104–48; and the author's *Montaigne and Shakspere*, pp. 132–38. Here there is no case; but there is much to be said for Mr. Whittaker's view (*Essays and Notices*, p. 94) that Spenser's late Cantos on Mutability were suggested by Bruno's *Spaccio*. Prof. McIntyre supports.
[4] His praise of Luther, and his compliments to the Lutherans, are in notable contrast to his verdict on Calvinism. What happened was that at Wittemberg he was on his best behaviour, and was well treated accordingly.
[5] As to the traitor's motives cp. McIntyre, p. 66 *sq.*; Berti, p. 262 *sq.*

appeared. Of all men of his time he had perhaps the least affinity with the Christian creed, which was repellent to him alike in the Catholic and the Protestant versions. The attempt to prove him a believer on the strength of a non-autograph manuscript[1] is idle. His approbation of a religion for the discipline of uncivilized peoples is put in terms of unbelief.[2] In the *Spaccio della bestia trionfante* he derides the notion of a union of divine and human natures, and substantially proclaims a natural (theistic) religion, negating all "revealed" religions alike. Where Boccaccio had accredited all the three leading religions, Bruno disallows all with paganism, though he puts that above Christianity.[3] And his disbelief grew more stringent with his years. Among the heretical propositions charged against him by the Inquisition were these: that there is transmigration of souls; that magic is right and proper; that the Holy Spirit is the same thing as the soul of the world; that the world is eternal; that Moses, like the Egyptians, wrought miracles by magic; that the sacred writings are but a romance (*sogno*); that the devil will be saved; that only the Hebrews are descended from Adam, other men having descended from progenitors created by God before Adam; that Christ was not God, but was a notorious sorcerer (*insigne mago*), who, having deceived men, was deservedly hanged, not crucified; that the prophets and the apostles were bad men and sorcerers, and that many of them were hanged as such. The cruder of these propositions rest solely on the allegation of Mocenigo, and were warmly repudiated by Bruno: others are professedly drawn, always, of course, by forcing his language, but not without some colourable pretext, from his two "poems," *De triplice, minimo, et mensura*, and *De monade, numero et figura*, published at Frankfort in 1591, in the last year of his freedom.[4] But the allusions in the *Sigillus Sigillorum*[5] to the weeping worship of a suffering Adonis, to the exhibition of suffering and miserable Gods, to transpierced divinities, and to sham miracles, were certainly intended to contemn the Christian system.

Alike in the details of his propaganda and in the temper of his utterance, Bruno expresses from first to last the spirit of freethought

[1] Noroff, as cited in Frith, p. 345.

[2] *De l'Infinito*, ed. Wagner, ii, 27; *Cena de la Ceneri*, ed. Wagner, i, 173; *Acrotismus*, ed. Gfrörer, p. 12.

[3] Cp. Berti, pp. 187–88; Whittaker, *Essays and Notices*, 1895, p. 89; and Louis's section, *Stellung zu Christenthum und Kirche*.

[4] Berti, pp. 297–98. It takes much searching in the two poems to find any of the ideas in question, and Berti has attempted no collation; but, allowing for distortions, the Inquisition has sufficient ground for outcry.

[5] *Sigillus Sigillorum: De duodecima contractionis speciae*. Cp. F. J. Clemens, *Giordano Bruno und Nicolaus von Cusa*, 1847, pp. 176, 183; and H. Brunnhofer, *Giordano Bruno's Weltanschauung und Verhängniss*, 1882, pp. 227, 237.

and free speech. *Libertas philosophica*[1] is the breath of his nostrils; and by his life and his death alike he upholds the ideal for men as no other before him did. The wariness of Rabelais and the non-committal skepticism of Montaigne are alike alien to him; he is too lacking in reticence, too explosive, to give due heed even to the common-sense amenities of life, much more to hedge his meaning with safeguarding qualifications. And it was doubtless as much by the contagion of his mood as by his lore that he impressed men.

His personal and literary influence was probably most powerful in respect of his eager propaganda of the Copernican doctrine, which he of his own force vitally expanded and made part of a pantheistic conception of the universe.[2] Where Copernicus adhered by implication to the idea of an external and limitary sphere—the last of the eight of the Ptolemaic theory—Bruno reverted boldly to the doctrine of Anaximandros, and declared firmly for the infinity of space and of the series of the worlds. In regard to biology he makes an equivalent advance, starting from the thought of Empedocles and Lucretius, and substituting an idea of natural selection for that of creative providence.[3] The conception is definitely thought out, and marks him as one of the renovators of scientific no less than of philosophic thought for the modern world; though the special paralysis of science under Christian theology kept his ideas on this side pretty much a dead letter for his own day. And indeed it was to the universal and not the particular that his thought chiefly and most enthusiastically turned. A philosophic poet rather than a philosopher or man of science, he yet set abroad for the modern world that conception of the physical infinity of the universe which, once psychologically assimilated, makes an end of the medieval theory of things. On this head he was eagerly affirmative; and the merely Pyrrhonic skeptics he assailed as he did the "asinine" orthodox, though he insisted on doubt as the beginning of wisdom.

Of his extensive literary output not much is stamped with lasting scientific fitness or literary charm; and some of his treatises, as those on mnemonics, have no more value than the product of his didactic model, Raymond Lully. As a writer he is at his best in the sweeping expatiation of his more general philosophic treatises,

[1] In the treatise *De Lampade combinatoria Lulliana* (1587). According to Berti (p. 220) he is the first to employ this phrase, which becomes the watchword of Spinoza (*libertas philosophandi*) a century later.

[2] Berti, cap. iv; Owen, p. 249; Ueberweg, ii. 27; Pünjer, p. 93 *sq.*; Whittaker, *Essays and Notices*, p. 66. As to Bruno's debt to Nicolaus of Cusa cp. Gustav Louis, as cited, p. 11; Pünjer, as cited; Carriere, *Die philosophische Weltanschauung der Reformationszeit*, p. 25; and Whittaker, p. 68. The argument of Carriere's second edition is analysed and rebutted by Mr. Whittaker, p. 253 *sq.*

[3] *De Immenso*, vii, c. 18, cited by Whittaker, *Essays and Notices*, p. 70.

where he attains a lifting ardour of inspiration, a fervour of soaring outlook, that puts him in the front rank of the thinkers of his age. And if his literary character is at times open to severe criticism in respect of his lack of balance, sobriety, and self-command, his final courage atones for such shortcomings.

His case, indeed, serves to remind us that at certain junctures it is only the unbalanced types that aid humanity's advance. The perfectly prudent and self-sufficing man does not achieve revolutions, does not revolt against tyrannies; he wisely adapts himself and subsists, letting the evil prevail as it may. It is the more impatient and unreticent, the eager and hot-brained—in a word, the faulty—who clash with oppression and break a way for quieter spirits through the hedges of enthroned authority. The serenely contemplative spirit is rather a possession than a possessor for his fellows; he may inform and enlighten, but is not in himself a countering or inspiriting force: a Shelley avails more than a Goethe against tyrannous power. And it may be that the battling enthusiast in his own way wins liberation for himself from "fear of fortune and death," as he wins for others liberty of action.[1] Even such a liberator, bearing other men's griefs and taking stripes that they might be kept whole, was Bruno.

And though he quailed at the first shock of capture and torture, when the end came he vindicated human nature as worthily as could any quietist. It was a long-drawn test. Charged on the traitor's testimony with many "blasphemies," he denied them all,[2] but stood to his published writings[3] and vividly expounded his theories,[4] professing in the usual manner to believe in conformity with the Church's teachings, whatever he might write on philosophy. It is impossible to trust the Inquisition records as to his words of self-humiliation;[5] though on the other hand no blame can rationally attach to anyone who, in his place, should try to deceive such enemies, morally on a level with hostile savages. It is certain that the Inquisitors frequently wrung recantations by torture.[6]

What is historically certain is that Bruno was not released, but sent on to Rome, and was kept there in prison for seven years. He was not the sort of heretic likely to be released; though the fact of his being a Dominican, and the desire to maintain the Church's

[1] As to Bruno's own claim in the *Eroici Furori*, cp. Whittaker, *Essays*, p. 90.
[2] Documents in Berti, pp. 407–18; McIntyre, p. 75 *sq.*
[3] See the document in Berti, p. 398 *sq.*; Frith, pp. 270–81.
[4] Berti, p. 400 *sq.*
[5] See Berti, p. 396; Owen, pp. 285–86; Frith, pp. 282–83.
[6] The controversy as to whether Galileo was tortured leaves it clear that torture was common. See Dr. Parchappe, *Galilée, sa vie*, etc., 1866, Ptie. ii, ch. 7.

intellectual credit, delayed so long his execution. Certainly not an atheist (he called himself in several of his book-titles *Philotheus;* he consigns *insano ateismo* to perdition;[1] and his quasi-pantheism or monism often lapses into theistic modes),[2] he yet was from first to last essentially though not professedly anti-Christian in his view of the universe. If the Church had cause to fear any philosophic teaching, it was his, preached with the ardour of a prophet and the eloquence of a poet. His doctrine that the worlds in space are innumerable was as offensive to orthodox ears as his specific negations of Christian dogma, outgoing as it did the later idea of Kepler and Galileo. He had, moreover, finally refused to make any fresh recantation; and the only detailed document extant concerning his final trial describes him as saying to his judges: "With more fear, perchance, do you pass sentence on me than I receive it."[3] According to all accessible records, he was burned alive at Rome in February, 1600, in the Field of Flowers, near where his statue now stands. As was probably customary, they tied his tongue before leading him to the stake, lest he should speak to the people;[4] and his martyrdom was an edifying spectacle for the vast multitude of pilgrims who had come from all parts of Christendom for the jubilee of the pope.[5] At the stake, when he was at the point of death, there was duly presented to him the crucifix, and he duly put it aside.

An attempt has been made by Professor Desdouits in a pamphlet (*La légende tragique de Jordano Bruno;* Paris, 1885) to show that there is no evidence that Bruno was burned; and an anonymous writer in the *Scottish Review* (October, 1888, Art. II), rabidly hostile to Bruno, has maintained the same proposition. Doubt on the subject dates from Bayle. Its main ground is the fewness of the documentary records, of which, further, the genuineness is now called in question. But no good reason is shown for doubting them. They are three.

1. The Latin letter of Gaspar Schopp (Scioppius), dated February 17, 1600, is an eye-witness's account of the sentencing and burning of Bruno at that date. (See it in full, in the original Latin, in Berti, p. 461 *sq.*, and in App. V to Frith, *Life*

[1] *Spaccio della bestia trionfante*, ed. Wagner, ii, 120.

[2] Prof. Carriere has contended that a transition from pantheism to theism marks the growth of his thought; but, as is shown by Mr. Whittaker, he is markedly pantheistic in his latest work of all, though his pantheism is not merely naturalistic. *Essays and Notices*, pp. 72, 253–58.

[3] Italian versions differ verbally. Cp. Levi, p. 379; Berti, p. 386. That inscribed on the Bruno statue at Rome is a close rendering of the Latin: *Majori forsan cum timore sententiam in me fertis quam ego accipiam*, preserved by Scioppius.

[4] *Avviso*, in Berti, p. 329; in Levi, p. 386.

[5] Levi, pp. 384–92. Levi relates (p. 390) that Bruno at the stake was heard to utter the words: "O Eterno, io fo uno sforzo supremo per attrarre in me quanto vi tra di più divino nell' universo." He cites no authority. An *Avviso* reports that Bruno said his soul would rise with the smoke to Paradise (p. 386; Berti, p. 330), but does not state that this was said at the stake. And Levi accepts the other report that Bruno was gagged.

of Bruno, and partly translated in Prof. Adamson's lectures, as cited. It was rep. by Struvius in his *Acta Literaria*, tom. v, and by La Croze in his *Entretiens sur divers sujets* in 1711, p. 287.) It was not printed till 1621, but the grounds urged for its rejection are totally inadequate, and involve assumptions, which are themselves entirely unproved, as to what Scioppius was likely to do. Finally, no intelligible reason is suggested for the forging of such a document. The remarks of Prof. Desdouits on this head have no force whatever. The writer in the *Scottish Review* (p. 263, and *note*) suggests as "at least as possible an hypothesis as any other that he [Bruno] was the author of the forged accounts of his own death." Comment is unnecessary.

2. There are preserved two extracts from Roman news-letters (*Avvisi*) of the time; one, dated February 12, 1600, commenting on the case; the other, dated February 19, relating the execution on the 17th. (See both in *S. R.*, pp. 264–65. They were first printed by Berti in *Documenti intorno a Giordano Bruno*, Rome, 1880, and are reprinted in his *Vita*, ed. 1889, cap. xix; also by Levi, as cited.) Against these testimonies the sole plea is that they mis-state Bruno's opinions and the duration of his imprisonment—a test which would reduce to mythology the contents of most newspapers in our own day. The writer in the *Scottish Review* makes the suicidal suggestion that, inasmuch as the errors as to dates occur in Schopp's letter, "the so-called Schopp was fabricated from these notices, or they from Schopp"—thus admitting one to be historical.

3. There has been found, by a Catholic investigator, a double entry in the books of the Lay Brotherhood of *San Giovanni Decollato*, whose function was to minister to prisoners under capital sentence, giving a circumstantial account of Bruno's execution. (See it in *S. R.*, pp. 266, 269, 270.) In this case, the main entry being dated "1600. Thursday. February 16th," the anonymous writer argues that "the whole thing resolves itself into a make-up," because February 16 was the Wednesday. The entry refers to the procedure of the Wednesday night and the Thursday morning; and such an error could easily occur in any case. Whatever may be one day proved, the cavils thus far count for nothing. All the while, the records as to Bruno remain in the hands of the Catholic authorities; but, despite the discredit constantly cast on the Church on the score of Bruno's execution, they offer no official denial of the common statement; while they do officially admit (*S. R.*, p. 252) that on February 8 Bruno was sentenced as an "obstinate heretic," and "given over to the Secular Court." On the other hand, the episode is well vouched; and the argument from the silence of ambassadors' letters is so far void. No pretence is made of tracing Bruno anywhere after February, 1600.

Since the foregoing note appeared in the first edition I have met with the essay of Mr. R. Copley Christie, "Was Giordano Bruno Really Burned?" (*Macmillan's Magazine*, October, 1885; rep. in Mr. Christie's *Selected Essays and Papers*, 1902). This is a crushing answer to the thesis of M. Desdouits, showing as it does clear grounds not only for affirming the genuineness of the letter of Scioppius, but for doubting the diligence of M. Desdouits. Mr. Christie points out (1) that in his book *Ecclesiasticus*, printed in 1612, Scioppius refers to the burning of Bruno almost in the words of his letter of 1600; (2) that in 1607 Kepler wrote to a correspondent of the burning of Bruno, giving as his authority J. M. Wacker, who in 1600 was living at Rome as the imperial ambassador; and (3) that the tract *Machiavellizatio*, 1621, in which the letter of Scioppius was first printed, was well known in its day, being placed on the *Index*, and answered by two writers without eliciting any repudiation from Scioppius, who lived till 1649. As M. Desdouits staked his case on the absence of allusion to the subject before 1661 (overlooking even the allusion by Mersenne, in 1624, cited by Bayle), his theory may be taken as exploded.

Bruno has been zealously blackened by Catholic writers for the obscenity of some of his writing[1] and the alleged freedom of his life—piquant charges, when we remember the life of the Papal Italy in which he was born. LUCILIO VANINI (otherwise Julius Cæsar Vanini), the next martyr of freethought, also an Italian (b. at Taurisano, 1585), is open to the more relevant charges of an inordinate vanity and some duplicity. Figuring as a Carmelite friar, which he was not, he came to England (1612) and deceitfully professed to abjure Catholicism,[2] gaining, however, nothing by the step, and contriving to be reconciled to the Church, after being imprisoned for forty-nine days on an unrecorded charge. Previously he had figured, like Bruno, as a wandering scholar at Amsterdam, Brussels, Cologne, Geneva, and Lyons; and afterwards he taught natural philosophy for a year at Genoa. His treatise, *Amphitheatrum Æternæ Providentiæ* (Lyons, 1615), is professedly directed against "ancient philosophers, Atheists, Epicureans, Peripatetics, and Stoics," and is ostensibly quite orthodox.[3] In one passage he untruthfully tells how, when imprisoned in England, he burned with the desire to shed his blood for the Catholic Church.[4] In another, after declaring that some Christian doctors have argued very weakly

[1] Notably his comedy *Il Candelaio*.
[2] Owen, *Skeptics of the Italian Renaissance*, p. 357. A full narrative, from the documents, is given in R. C. Christie's essay, "Vanini in England," in the *English Historical Review* of April, 1895, reprinted in his *Selected Essays and Papers*, 1902.
[3] See it analysed by Owen, pp. 361–68, and by Carriere, *Weltanschauung*, pp. 496–504.
[4] *Amphitheatrum*, 1615, Exercit. xix, pp. 117–18.

against the Epicureans on immortality, he avows that he, "Christianus nomine cognomine Catholicus," could hardly have held the doctrine if he had not learned it from the Church, "the most certain and infallible mistress of truth."[1] As usual, the attack leaves us in doubt as to the amount of real atheism current at the time. The preface asserts that "'Αθεότητο *autem secta pestilentissima quotidie, latius et latius vires acquirit eundo*," and there are various hostile allusions to atheists in the text;[2] but the arguments cited from them are such as might be brought by deists against miracles and the Christian doctrine of sin; and there is an allusion of the customary kind to "*Nicolaus Machiavellus Atheorum facile princeps*,"[3] which puts all in doubt. The later published Dialogues, *De Admirandis Naturæ Arcanis*,[4] while showing a freer critical spirit, would seem to be in part earlier in composition, if we can trust the printer's preface, which represents them as collected from various quarters, and published only with the reluctant consent of the author.[5] This, of course, may be a mystification; in any case the *Dialogues* twice mention the *Amphitheatrum;* and the fourth book, in which this mention occurs, may be taken on this and other grounds to set forth his later ideas. Even the *Dialogues*, however, while discussing many questions of creed and science in a free fashion, no less profess orthodoxy; and, while one passage is pantheistic,[6] they also denounce atheism.[7] And whereas one passage does avow that the author in his *Amphitheatrum* had said many things he did not believe, the context clearly suggests that the reference was not to the main argument, but to some of its dubious facts.[8] In any case, though the title—chosen by the editors—speaks daringly enough of "Nature, the queen and goddess of mortals," Vanini cannot be shown to be an

[1] *Amphitheatrum*, Exercit. xxvii, p. 164. [2] *Id.* pp. 72, 73, 78, 113, etc.

[3] P. 35. Machiavelli is elsewhere attacked. Pp. 36, 50.

[4] *Julii Cæsaris Vanini Neapolitani, Theologi, Philosophi, et juris utriusque Doctoris, de Admirandis Naturæ Reginæque Deæque Mortalium Arcanis, libri quatuor. Lutetiæ*, 1616.

[5] Mr. Owen makes a serious misstatement on this point, by which I was formerly misled. He writes (p. 369) that from the publisher's preface we "learn that the *Dialogues* were not written by Vanini, but by his disciples. They are a collection of discursive conversations embodying their master's opinions." This is not what the preface says. It tells, after a high-pitched eulogy of Vanini, that "nos publicæ utilitatis solliciti, alia eius monumenta, *quæ avarius retinebat*, per idoneos ex scriptores nancisci curavimus." In ascribing the matter of the dialogues to Vanini's young days, Mr. Owen forgets the references to the *Amphitheatrum*.

[6] "*Alex.* Sed in qua nam Religione verè et piè Deum coli vetusti Philosophi existimarunt? *Vanini.* In unica Naturæ lege, quam ipsa Natura, quæ Deus est (est enim principium motus)....." *De Arcanis*, as cited, p. 366. Lib. iv, Dial. 50. See Rousselot's French tr. 1842, p. 227. This passage is cited by Hallam (*Lit. Hist.* ii, 461) as avowing "*disbelief of all religion except* such as Nature.....has planted in the minds of men"—a heedless perversion.

[7] *De Arcanis*, pp. 354–60, 420–22 (Dial. 50, 56); Rousselot, pp. 219–23, 271–73.

[8] The special reference (lib. iv, dial. 56, p. 428) is to a story of an infant prophesying when only twenty-four hours old. (*Amphitheatrum*, Ex. vi, p. 38; cp. Owen, p. 368, *note.*) On this and on other points Cousin (cited by Owen, pp. 368, 371, 377) and Hallam (*Lit. Hist.* ii, 461) make highly prejudiced statements. Quoting the final pages on which the dialoguist passes from serious debate to a profession of levity, and ends by calling for the play-table, the English historian dismisses him as "the wretched man."

atheist;[1] and the attacks upon him as an immoral writer are not any better supported.[2] The publication of the dialogues was in fact formally authorized by the Sorbonne,[3] and it does not even appear that when he was charged with atheism and blasphemy at Toulouse that work was founded on, save in respect of its title.[4] The charges rested on the testimony of a treacherous associate as to his private conversation; and, if true, it only amounted to proving his pantheism, expressed in his use of the word "Nature." At his trial he expressly avowed and argued for theism. The judges, by one account, did not agree. Yet he was convicted, by the voices of the majority, and burned alive (February 9, 1619) on the day of his sentence. Drawn on a hurdle, in his shirt, with a placard on his shoulders inscribed "Atheist and Blasphemer of the name of God," he went to his death with a high heart, rejoicing, as he cried in Italian, to die like a philosopher.[5] A Catholic historian,[6] who was present, says he hardily declared that "Jesus facing death sweated with fear: I die undaunted." But before burning him they tore out his tongue by the roots; and the Christian historian is humorous over the victim's long cry of agony.[7] No martyr ever faced death with a more dauntless courage than this

> Lonely antagonist of Destiny
> That went down scornful before many spears;[8]

and if the man had all the faults falsely imputed to him,[9] his death might shame his accusers.

Vanini, like Bruno, can now be recognized and understood as an Italian of vivacious temperament, studious without the student's calm, early learned, alert in debate, fluent, imprudent, and ill-

[1] Cp. Carriere's analysis of the Dialogues, pp. 505–59; and the *Apologia pro Jul. Cæsare Vanino* (by Arpe), 1712.

[2] See Owen's vindication, pp. 371–74. Renan's criticism (*Averroès*, pp. 420–23) is not quite judicial. See many others cited by Carriere, p. 516.

[3] It is difficult to understand how the censor could let pass the description of Nature in the title; but this may have been added after the authorization. The book is dedicated by Vanini to Marshal Bassompierre, and the epistle dedicatory makes mention of the *Serenissima Regina æterni nominis Maria Medicæa*, which would disarm suspicion. In any case the permit was revoked, and the book condemned to be burned.

[4] Owen, p. 395.

[5] *Mercure Français*, 1619, tom. v, p. 64.

[6] Gramond (Barthélemi de Grammont), *Historia Galliæ ab excessu Henrici IV*, 1643, p. 209. Carriere translates the passage in full, pp. 500–12, 515; as does David Durand in his hostile *Vie et Sentimens de Lucilio Vanini*, 1717. As to Gramond see the *Lettres de Gui Patin*, who (Lett. 428, ed. Reveillé-Parise) calls him *âme foible et bigote*, and guilty of falsehood and flattery.

[7] Gramond, p. 210. Of Vanini, as of Bruno, it is recorded that at the stake he repelled the proffered crucifix. Owen and other writers, who justly remark that he well might, overlook the once received belief that it was the official practice, with obstinate heretics, to proffer a *red-hot* crucifix, so that the victim should be sure to spurn it with open anger.

[8] Stephen Phillips, *Marpessa*.

[9] Cp. Owen, pp. 389, 391, and Carriere, pp. 512–13, as to the worst calumnies. It is significant that Vanini was tried *solely* for blasphemy and atheism. What is proved against him is that he and an associate practised a rather gross fraud on the English ecclesiastical authorities, having apparently no higher motive than gain and a free life. Mr. Christie notes, however, that Vanini in his writings always speaks very kindly of England and the English, and so did not add ingratitude to his act of imposture.

balanced. By his own account he studied theology under the Carmelite Bartolomeo Argotti, phœnix of the preachers of the time;[1] but from the English Carmelite, John Bacon, "the prince of Averroïsts,"[2] he declares, he "learned to swear only by Averroës"; and of Pomponazzi he speaks as his master, and as "prince of the philosophers of our age."[3] He has criticized both freely in his *Amphitheatrum;* but whereas that work is a professed vindication of orthodoxy, we may infer from the *De Arcanis* that the arguments of these skeptics, like those of the contemporary atheists whom he had met in his travels, had kept their hold on his thought even while he controverted them. For it cannot be disputed that the long passages which he quotes from the "atheist at Amsterdam"[4] are put with a zest and cogency which are not infused into the professed rebuttals, and are in themselves quite enough to arouse the anger and suspicion of a pious reader. A writer who set forth so fully the acute arguments of unbelievers, unprintable by their authors, might well be suspected of writing at Christianity when he confuted the creeds of the pagans. As was noted later of Fontenelle, he put arguments against oracles which endangered prophecy; his dismissal of sorcery as the dream of troubled brains appeals to reason and not to faith; and his disparagement of pagan miracles logically bore upon the Christian.

When he comes to the question of immortality he grows overtly irreverent. Asked by the interlocutor in the last dialogue to give his views on the immortality of the soul, he begs to be excused, protesting: "I have vowed to my God that that question shall not be handled by me till I become old, rich, and a German." And without overt irreverence he is ever and again unserious. Perfectly transparent is the irony of the appeal, "Let us give faith to the prescripts of the Church, and due honour to the sacrosanct Gregorian apparitions,"[5] and the protestation, "I will not invalidate the powers of holy water, to which Alexander, Doctor and Pontifex of the Christians, and interpreter of the divine will, accorded such countless privileges."[6] And even in the *Amphitheatrum*, with all the parade of defending the faith, there is a plain balance of cogency on the side of the case for the attack,[7] and a notable disposition to rely finally on lines of argument to which faith could never give real welcome. The writer's mind, it is clear, was familiar with doubt.

[1] *De Arcanis*, p. 205. Lib. iii, dial. 30.
[2] *Amphitheatrum*, p. 17.
[3] *De Arcanis*, lib. iv, dial. 52, p. 379; dial. 51, p. 373. Cp. *Amphitheatrum*, p. 36; and *De Arcanis*, p. 20.
[4] *De Arcanis*, dial. 50 and 56. In the *Amphitheatrum* he adduces an equally skilful German atheist (p. 73).
[5] Dial. li, p. 371.
[6] Dial. liv, p. 407.
[7] Cp. Rousselot, *notice*, p. xi.

In the malice of orthodoxy there is sometimes an instinctive perception of hostility; and though Vanini had written, among other things,[1] an *Apologia pro lege mosaïcâ et christianâ*, to which he often refers, and an *Apologia pro concilio Tridentino*, he can be seen even in the hymn to deity with which he concludes his *Amphitheatrum* to have no part in evangelical Christianity.

He was in fact a deist with the inevitable leaning of the philosophic theist to pantheism; and whatever he may have said to arouse priestly hatred at Toulouse, he was rather less of an atheist than Spinoza or Bruno or John Scotus. On his trial,[2] pressed as to his real beliefs by judges who had doubtless challenged his identification of God with Nature, he passed from a profession of orthodox faith in a trinity into a flowing discourse which could as well have availed for a vindication of pantheism as for the proposition of a personal God. Seeing a straw on the ground, he picked it up and talked of its history; and when brought back again from his affirmation of Deity to his doctrine of Nature, he set forth the familiar orthodox theorem that, while Nature wrought the succession of seeds and fruits, there must have been a first seed which was created. It was the habitual standing ground of theism; and they burned him all the same. It remains an open question whether personal enmity on the part of the prosecuting official[3] or a real belief that he had uttered blasphemies against Jesus or Mary was the determining force, or whether even less motive sufficed. A vituperative Jesuit of that age sees intolerable freethinking in his suggestion of the unreality of demoniacal possession and the futility of exorcisms.[4] And for that much they were not incapable of burning men in Catholic Toulouse in the days of Mary de Medici.

There are in fact reasons for surmizing that in the cases alike of Bruno and of Vanini it was the attitude of the speculator towards scientific problems that primarily or mainly aroused distrust and anger among the theologians. Vanini is careful to speak equivocally of the eternity of the universe; and though he makes a passing mention of Kepler,[5] he does not name Copernicus. He had learned something from the fate of Bruno. Yet in the Dialogue *De cœli forma et motore*[6] he declares so explicitly for a naturalistic explanation of the movements of the heavenly bodies that he must have aroused in some orthodox readers such anger as was set up in Plato

[1] Durand compiles a list of ten or eleven works of Vanini from the allusions in the *Amphitheatrum* and the *De Arcanis*.
[2] Reported by Gramond, as cited.
[3] Owen, pp. 393–94.
[4] Garasse, *Doctrine curieuse des beaux esprits*, 1623.
[5] *De Arcanis*, dial. vii, p. 36.
[6] Dial. iv, p. 21.

by a physical theory of sun and stars. After an à priori discussion on Aristotelian lines, the querist in the dialogue asks what may fitly be held, with an eye to religion, concerning the movements of the spheres. "This," answers Vanini, "unless I am in error: the mass of the heaven is moved in its proper gyratory way by the nature of its elements." "How then," asks the querist, "are the heavens moved by certain and fixed laws, unless divine minds, participating in the primal motion, there operate?" "Where is the wonder?" returns Vanini. "Does not a certain and fixed law of motion act in the most paltry clockwork machines, made by a drunken German, even as there works silently in a tertian and quartan fever a motion which comes and goes at fixed periods without trangressing its line by a moment? The sea also at certain and fixed times, by its nature, as you peripatetics affirm, is moved in progressions and regressions. No less, then, I affirm the heaven to be forever carried by the same motion in virtue of its nature (*a sua pura forma*) and not to be moved by the will of intelligence." And the disciple assents. Kepler had seen fit, either in sincerity or of prudence, to leave "divine minds" in the planets; and Vanini's negation, though not accompanied by any assertion of the motion of the earth, was enough to provoke the minds which had only three years before put Copernicus on the *Index*, and challenged Galileo for venting his doctrine.

It is at this stage that we begin to realize the full play of the Counter-Reformation, as against the spirit of science. The movement of mere theological and ecclesiastical heresy had visibly begun to recede in the world of mind, and in its stead, alike in Protestant and in Catholic lands, there was emerging a new activity of scientific research, vaguely menacing to all theistic faith. Kepler represented it in Germany, Harriott and Harvey and Gilbert and Bacon in England; from Italy had come of late the portents of Bruno and Galileo; even Spain yielded the *Examen de Ingenios* of Huarte (1575), where with due protestation of theism the physicist insists upon natural causation; and now Vanini was exhibiting the same incorrigible zest for a naturalistic explanation of all things. His dialogues are full of such questionings; the mere metaphysic and theosophy of the *Amphitheatrum* are being superseded by discussions on physical and physiological phenomena. It was for this, doubtless, that the *De Arcanis* won the special vogue over which the Jesuit Garasse was angrily exclaiming ten years later.[1] Not

[1] *Doctrine curieuse des beaux esprits de ce temps*, 1623, p. 848.

merely the doubts cast upon sorcery and diabolical possession, but the whole drift, often enough erratic, of the inquiry as to how things in nature came about, caught the curiosity of the time, soon to be stimulated by more potent and better-governed minds than that of the ill-starred Vanini. And for every new inquirer there would be a hostile zealot in the Church, where the anti-intellectual instinct was now so much more potent than it had been in the days before Luther, when heresy was diagnosed only as a danger to revenue.

It was with GALILEO that there began the practical application of the Copernican theory to astronomy, and, indeed, the decisive demonstration of its truth. With him, accordingly, began the positive rejection of the Copernican theory by the Church; for thus far it had never been officially vetoed—having indeed been generally treated as a wild absurdity. Almost immediately after the publication of Galileo's *Sidereus Nuncius* (1610) his name is found in the papers of the Inquisition, with that of Cremonini of Padua, as a subject of investigation.[1] The juxtaposition is noteworthy. Cremonini was an Aristotelian, with Averroïst leanings, and reputed an atheist;[2] and it was presumably on this score that the Inquisition was looking into his case. At the same time, as an Aristotelian he was strongly opposed to Galileo, and is said to have been one of those who refused to look through Galileo's telescope.[3] Galileo, on the other hand, was ostensibly a good Catholic; but his discovery of the moons of Jupiter was a signal confirmation of the Copernican theory, and the new status at once given to that made a corresponding commotion in the Church. Thus he had against him both the unbelieving pedants of the schools and the typical priests.

In his book the great discoverer had said nothing explicitly on the subject of the Copernican theory; but in lectures and conversations he had freely avowed his belief in it; and the implications of the published treatise were clear to all thinkers.[4] And though, when he visited Rome in 1611, he was well received by Pope Paul V, and his discoveries were favourably reported of by the four scientific experts nominated at the request of Cardinal Bellarmin to examine them,[5] it only needed that the Biblical cry should be raised to

[1] Karl von Gebler, *Galileo Galilei and the Roman Curia*, Eng. tr. 1879, pp. 36–37.

[2] This appears from the letters of Sagredo to Galileo. Gebler, p. 37. Cp. Gui Patin, Lett. 816, ed. Reveillé-Parise, 1846, iii. 758; Bayle, art. CREMONIN. notes C and D; and Renan, *Averroès*, 3e édit. pp. 408–13. Patin writes that his friend Naudé "avoit été intime ami de Cremonin, qui n'étoit point meilleur Chrétien que Pomponace, que Machiavel, que Cardan et telles autres.....dont le pays abonde."

[3] Lange, *Gesch. des Materialismus*, i, 183 (Eng. tr. i, 220); Gebler, p. 25. Libri actually made the refusal; but all that is proved as to Cremonini is that he opposed Galileo's discoveries à priori. As to the attitude of such opponents see Galileo's letter to Kepler. J. J. Fahie, *Galileo: his Life and Work*, 1903, pp. 101–102.

[4] Fahie, *Galileo*, p. 100.

[5] *Id.* p. 127.

change the situation. The Church still contained men individually open to new scientific ideas; but she was then more than ever dominated by the forces of tradition; and as soon as those forces had been practically evoked his prosecution was bound to follow. The cry of "religion in danger" silenced the saner men at Rome.

The fashion in which Galileo's sidereal discoveries were met is indeed typical of the whole history of freethought. The clergy pointed to the story of Joshua stopping the sun and moon; the average layman scouted the new theory as plain folly; and typical schoolmen insisted that "the heavens are unchangeable," and that there was no authority in Aristotle for the new assertions. With such minds the man of science had to argue, and in deference to such he had at length to affect to doubt his own demonstrations.[1] The Catholic Reaction had finally created as bitter a spirit of hostility to free science in the Church as existed among the Protestants; and in Italy even those who saw the moons of Jupiter through his telescope dared not avow what they had seen.[2] It was therefore an unfortunate step on Galileo's part to go from Padua, which was under the rule of Venice, then anti-papal,[3] to Tuscany, on the invitation of the Grand Duke. When in 1613 he published his treatise on the solar spots, definitely upholding Copernicus against Jesuits and Aristotelians, trouble became inevitable; and his letter[4] to his pupil, Father Castelli, professor of mathematics at Pisa, discussing the Biblical argument with which they had both been met, at once evoked an explosion when circulated by Castelli. New trouble arose when Galileo in 1615 wrote his apology in the form of a letter to his patroness the Dowager Grand Duchess Cristina of Tuscany, extracts from which became current. An outcry of ignorant Dominican monks[5] sufficed to set at work the machinery of the *Index*,[6] the first result of which (1616) was to put on the list of condemned books the great treatise of Copernicus, published seventy-three years before. Galileo personally escaped for the present through the friendly intervention of the Pope, Paul V, on the appeal of his patron, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, apparently on the ground that he had not publicly taught the Copernican theory. It would seem

[1] Gebler, pp. 54, 129, and *passim*; *The Private Life of Galileo* (by Mrs. Olney), Boston, 1870, pp. 67–72.

[2] Galileo's letter to Kepler, cited by Gebler, p. 26.

[3] The Jesuits were expelled from Venice in 1616, in retaliation for a papal interdict.

[4] See it summarized by Gebler, pp. 46–60, and quoted in the *Private Life*, pp. 83–85.

[5] The measure of reverence with which the orthodox handled the matter may be inferred from the fact that the Dominican Caccini, who preached against Galileo in Florence, took as one of his texts the verse in Acts i: "*Viri Galilaei, quid statis aspicientes in cœlum*," making a pun on the Scripture.

[6] See this summarized by Gebler, pp. 64–70.

as if some of the heads of the Church were at heart Copernicans;[1] but they were in any case obliged to disown a doctrine felt by so many others to be subversive of the Church's authority.

See the details of the procedure in Domenico Berti, *Il Processo Originale de Galileo Galilei*, ed. 1878, cap. iv; in Fahie, ch. viii; and in Gebler, ch. vi. The last-cited writer claims to show that, of two records of the "admonition" to Galileo, one, the more stringent in its terms, was false, *though made at the date it bears*, to permit of subsequent proceedings against Galileo. But the whole thesis is otiose. It is admitted (Gebler, p. 89) that Galileo was admonished "not to defend or hold the Copernican doctrine." Gebler contends, however, that this was not a command to keep "entire silence," and that therefore Galileo is not justly to be charged with having disobeyed the injunction of the Inquisition when, in his *Dialogues on the Two Principal Systems of the World, the Ptolemaic and Copernican* (1632), he dealt dialectically with the subject, neither affirming nor denying, but treating both theories as hypotheses. But the real issue is not Galileo's cautious disobedience (see Gebler's own admissions, p. 149) to an irrational decree, but the crime of the Church in silencing him. It is not likely that the "enemies" of Galileo, as Gebler supposes (pp. 90, 338), anticipated his later dialectical handling of the subject, and so falsified the decision of the Inquisition against him in 1616. Gebler had at first adopted the German theory that the absolute command to silence was forged in 1632; and, finding the document certainly belonged to 1616, framed the new theory, quite unnecessarily, to save Galileo's credit. The two records are quite in the spirit and manner of Inquisitorial diplomacy. As Berti remarks, "the Holy Office proceeded with much heedlessness (*legerezza*) and much confusion" in 1616. Its first judgment, in either form, merely emphasizes the guilt of the second. Cp. Fahie, pp. 167–69.

Thus officially "admonished" for his heresy, but not punished, in 1616, Galileo kept silence for some years, till in 1618 he published his (erroneous) theory of the tides, which he sent with an ironical epistle to the friendly Archduke Leopold of Austria, professing to be propounding a mere dream, disallowed by the official veto on Copernicus.[2] This, however, did him less harm than his essay *Il Saggiatore* ("The Scales"), in which he opposed the Jesuit Grassi on the question of comets. Receiving the *imprimatur* in 1623, it was dedicated to the new pope, Urban VIII, who, as the Cardinal Maffeo Barberini, had been Galileo's friend. The latter could now

[1] See *The Private Life of Galileo*, pp. 86–87, 91, 99; Gebler, p. 44; Fahie, pp. 169–70; Berti, *Il Processo Originale de Galileo Galilei*, 1878, p. 53.

[2] Gebler (p. 101) solemnly comments on this letter as a lapse into "servility" on Galileo's part.

hope for freedom of speech, as he had all along had a number of friends at the papal court, besides many priests, among his admirers and disciples. But the enmity of the Jesuits countervailed all. They did not succeed in procuring a censure of the *Saggiatore*, though that subtly vindicates the Copernican system while professing to hold it disproved by the fiat of the Church;[1] but when, venturing further, he after another lapse of years produced his *Dialogues on the Two Systems*, for which he obtained the papal *imprimatur* in 1632, they caught him in their net. Having constant access to the pope, they contrived to make him believe that Galileo had ridiculed him in one of the personages of his Dialogues. It was quite false; but one of the pope's anti-Copernican arguments was there unconsciously made light of; and his wounded vanity was probably a main factor in the impeachment which followed.[2] His Holiness professed to have been deceived into granting the *imprimatur*;[3] a Special Commission was set on foot; the proceedings of 1616 were raked up; and Galileo was again summoned to Rome. He was old and frail, and sent medical certificates of his unfitness for such travel; but it was insisted on, and as under the papal tyranny there was no help, he accordingly made the journey. After many delays he was tried, and, on his formal abjuration, sentenced to formal imprisonment (1633) for teaching the "absurd" and "false doctrine" of the motion of the earth and the non-motion of the sun from east to west. In this case the pope, whatever were his motives, acted as a hot anti-Copernican, expressing his personal opinion on the question again and again, and always in an anti-Copernican sense. In both cases, however, the popes, while agreeing to the verdict, abstained from officially ratifying it,[4] so that, in proceeding to force Galileo to abjure his doctrine, the Inquisition technically exceeded its powers—a circumstance in which some Catholics appear to find comfort. Seeing that three of the ten cardinals named in the preamble to the sentence did not sign, it has been inferred that they dissented; but there is no good reason to suppose that either the pope or they wilfully abstained from signing. They had gained their point—the humiliation of the great discoverer.

Compare Gebler, p. 241; *Private Life*, p. 257, quoting Tiraboschi. For an exposure of the many perversions of the facts as to Galileo by Catholic writers see Parchappe, *Galilée, sa vie*, etc., 2e Partie. To such straits has the Catholic Church been reduced in this matter that part of its defence of the

[1] Gebler, pp. 112–13. [2] *Private Life*, pp. 216–18; Gebler, pp. 157–62.
[3] Berti, pp. 61–64; *Private Life*, pp. 212–13; Gebler, p. 162.
[4] Gebler, p. 239; *Private Life*, p. 256.

treatment of Galileo is the plea that he unwarrantably asserted that the fixity of the sun and the motion of the earth were *taught in the Scriptures*. Sir Robert Inglis is quoted as having maintained this view in England in 1824 (Mendham, *The Literary Policy of the Church of Rome*, 2nd ed. 1830, p. 176), and the same proposition was maintained in 1850 by a Roman cardinal. See *Galileo e l'Inquisizione*, by Monsignor Marini, Roma, 1850, pp. 1, 53–54, etc. Had Galileo really taught as is there asserted, he would only have been assenting to what his priestly opponents constantly dinned in his ears. But in point of fact he had not so assented; for in his letter to Castelli (see Gebler, pp. 46–50) he had earnestly deprecated the argument from the Bible, urging that, though Scripture could not err, its interpreters might misunderstand it; and even going so far as to argue, with much ingenuity, that the story of Joshua, literally interpreted, could be made to harmonize with the Copernican theory, but not at all with the Ptolemaic.

The thesis revived by Monsignor Marini deserves to rank as the highest flight of absurdity and effrontery in the entire discussion (cp. Berti, *Giordano Bruno*, 1889, p. 306, *note*). Every step in both procedures of the Inquisition insists on the falsity and the anti-scriptural character of the doctrine that the earth moves round the sun (see Berti, *Il Processo*, p. 115 *sq.*; Gebler, pp. 76–77, 230–34); and never once is it hinted that Galileo's error lay in ascribing to the Bible the doctrine of the earth's fixity In the Roman *Index* of 1664 the works of Galileo and Copernicus are alike vetoed, with all other writings affirming the movement of the earth and the stability of the sun; and in the *Index* of 1704 are included *libri omnes docentes mobilitatem terrae et immobilitatem solis* (Putnam, *The Censorship of the Church of Rome*, 1906–1907, i, 308, 312).

The stories of his being tortured and blinded, and saying "Still it moves," are indeed myths.[1] The broken-spirited old man was in no mood so to speak; he was, moreover, in all respects save his science, an orthodox Catholic,[2] and as such not likely to defy the Church to its face. In reality he was formally in the custody of the Inquisition—and this not in a cell, but in the house of an official—for only twenty-two days. After the sentence he was again formally detained for some seventeen days in the Villa Medici, but was then allowed to return to his own rural home at Acatri,[3] on condition that he lived in solitude, receiving no visitors. He was

[1] Gebler, pp. 249-63; *Private Life*, pp. 255-56; Marini, pp. 55-57. The "e pur si muove" story is first heard of in 1774. As to the torture, it is to be remembered that Galileo recanted under *threat* of it. See Berti, pp. 93-101; Marini, p. 59; Sir O. Lodge, *Pioneers of Science*, 1893, pp. 128-31. Berti argues that only the special humanity of the Commissary-General, Macolano, saved him from the torture. Cp. Gebler, p. 259, *note*.

[2] Gebler, p. 281.

[3] *Private Life*, pp. 265-60, 268; Gebler, p. 252.

thus much more truly a prisoner than the so-called "prisoner of the Vatican" in our own day. The worst part of the sentence, however, was the placing of all his works, published and unpublished, on the *Index Expurgatorius*, and the gag thus laid on all utterance of rational scientific thought in Italy—an evil of incalculable influence. "The lack of liberty and speculation," writes a careful Italian student, "was the cause of the death first of the Accademia dei Lincei, an institution unique in its time; then of the Accademia del Cimento. Thus Italy, after the marvellous period of vigorous native civilization in the thirteenth century, after a second period of civilization less native but still its own, as being Latin, saw itself arrested on the threshold of a third and not less splendid period. Vexations and prohibitions expelled courage, spontaneity, and universality from the national mind; literary style became uncertain, indeterminate; and, forbidden to treat of government, science, or religion, turned to things frivolous and fruitless. For the great academies, instituted to renovate and further the study of natural philosophy, were substituted small ones without any such aim. Intellectual energy, the love of research and of objective truth, greatness of feeling and nobility of character, all suffered. Nothing so injures a people as the compulsion to express or conceal its thought solely from motives of fear. The nation in which those conditions were set up became intellectually inferior to those in which it was possible to pass freely in the vast regions of knowledge. Her culture grew restricted, devoid of originality, vaporous, umbratile; there arose habits of servility and dissimulation; great books, great men, great purposes were denaturalized."[1]

It was thus in the other countries of Europe that Galileo's teaching bore its fruit, for he speedily got his condemned Dialogues published in Latin by the Elzevirs; and in 1638, also at the hands of the Elzevirs, appeared his *Dialogues of the New Sciences* [*i.e.*, of mechanics and motion], the "foundation of mechanical physics." By this time he was totally blind, and then only, when physicians could not help him save by prolonging his life, was he allowed to live under strict surveillance in Florence, needing a special indulgence from the Inquisition to permit him even to go to church at Easter. The desire of his last blind days, to have with him his best-beloved pupil, Father Castelli, was granted only under rigid limitation and supervision, though even the papacy could not keep from him the

[1] Berti, *Il Processo di Galileo*, pp. 111-12.

plaudits of the thinkers of Europe. Finally he passed away in his rural "prison"—after five years of blindness—in 1642, the year of Newton's birth. At that time his doctrines were under anathema in Italy, and known elsewhere only to a few. Hobbes in 1634 tried in vain to procure for the Earl of Newcastle a copy of the earlier *Dialogues* in London, and wrote: "It is not possible to get it for money. .....I hear say it is called-in, in Italy, as a book that will do more hurt to their religion than all the books of Luther and Calvin, such opposition they think is between their religion and natural reason."[1] Not till 1757 did the papacy permit other books teaching the Copernican system; in 1765 Galileo was still under ban; not until 1822 was permission given to treat the theory as true; and not until 1835 was the work of Copernicus withdrawn from the *Index*.[2]

While modern science was thus being placed on its special basis, a continuous resistance was being made in the schools to the dogmatism which held the mutilated lore of Aristotle as the sum of human wisdom. Like the ecclesiastical revolution, this had been protracted through centuries. Aristotelianism, whether theistic or pantheistic, whether orthodox or heterodox,[3] had become a dogmatism like another, a code that vetoed revision, a fetter laid on the mind. Even as a negation of Christian superstition it had become impotent, for the Peripatetics were not only ready to make common cause with the Jesuits against Galileo, as we have seen; some of them were content even to join in the appeal to the Bible.[4] The result of such uncritical partisanship was that the immense service of Aristotle to mental life—the comprehensive grasp which gave him his long supremacy as against rival system-makers, and makes him still so much more important than any of the thinkers who in the sixteenth century revolted against him—was by opponents disregarded and denied, though the range and depth of his influence are apparent in all the polemic against him, notably in that of Bacon, who is constantly citing him, and relates his reasoning to him, however antagonistically, at every turn.

Naturally, the less sacrosanct dogmatism was the more freely

[1] Letter of Hobbes to Newcastle, in *Report of the Hist. Mss. Comm. on the Duke of Portland's Papers*, 1892, ii. Hobbes explains that few copies were brought over, "and they that buy such books are not such men as to part with them again." "I doubt not," he adds, "but the translation of it will here be publicly embraced."

[2] Gebler, pp. 312–15; Putnam, *Censorship of the Church of Rome*, i, 313–14.

[3] See Ueberweg, ii, 12, as to the conflicting types. In addition to Cremonini, several leading Aristotelians in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were accused of atheism (Hallam, *Lit. Hist.* ii, 101–102), the old charge against the Peripatetic school. Hallam (p. 102) complains that CESALPINI of Pisa "substitutes the barren unity of pantheism for religion." Cp. Ueberweg, ii, 14; Renan, *Averroès*, 3e édit. p. 417. An Averroïst on some points, he believed in separate immortality.

[4] Gebler, pp. 37, 45. Gebler appears to surmise that Cremonini may have escaped the attack upon himself by turning suspicion upon Galileo, but as to this there is no evidence.

assailed; and in the sixteenth century the attacks became numerous and vehement. Luther was a furious anti-Aristotelian,[1] as were also some Calvinists; but in 1570 we find Beza declaring to Ramus[2] that "the Genevese have decreed, once and for ever, that they will never, neither in logic nor in any other branch of learning, turn away from the teaching of Aristotle." At Oxford the same code held.[3] In Italy, Telesio, who notably anticipates the tone of Bacon as to natural science, and is largely followed by him, influenced Bruno in the anti-Aristotelian direction,[4] though it was in a long line from Aristotle that he got his principle of the eternity of the universe. The Spaniard Ludovicus Vives, too (1492–1540), pronounced by Lange one of the clearest heads of his age, had insisted on progress beyond Aristotle in the spirit of naturalist science.[5] But the typical anti-Aristotelian of the century was RAMUS (Pierre de la Ramée, 1515–1572), whose long and strenuous battle against the ruling school at Paris brought him to his death in the Massacre of St. Bartholomew.[6] Ramus hardily laid it down that "there is no authority over reason, but reason ought to be queen and ruler over authority."[7] Such a message was of more value than his imperfect attempt to supersede the Aristotelian logic. Bacon, who carried on in England the warfare against the Aristotelian tradition, never ventured so to express himself as against the theological tyranny in particular, though, as we have seen, the general energy and vividness of his argumentation gave him an influence which undermined the orthodoxies to which he professed to conform. On the other hand, he did no such service to exact science as was rendered in his day by Kepler and Galileo and their English emulators; and his full didactic influence came much later into play.

Like fallacies to Bacon's may be found in DESCARTES, whose seventeenth-century reputation as a champion of theism proved mainly the eagerness of theists for a plausible defence. Already in his own day his arguments were logically confuted by both Gassendi and Hobbes; and his partial success with theists was a success of partisanism. It was primarily in respect of his habitual appeal to reason and argument, in disregard of the assumptions of faith, and secondarily in respect of his real scientific work, that he counts

[1] Ueberweg, ii, 17. [2] *Epist.* 36. [3] See above, p. 45.

[4] Bartholmèss, *Jordano Bruno*, i, 49.

[5] Lange, *Gesch. des Mater.* i, 189–90 (Eng. tr. i, 228). Born in Valencia and trained at Paris, Vives became a humanist teacher at Louvain, and was called to England (1523) to be tutor to the Princess Mary. During his stay he taught at Oxford. Being opposed to the divorce of Henry VIII, he was imprisoned for a time, afterwards living at Bruges.

[6] See the monograph, *Ramus, sa vie, ses écrits, et ses opinions*, par Ch. Waddington, 1855. Owen has a good account of Ramus in his *French Skeptics*.

[7] *Scholæ math.* l. iii, p. 78, cited by Waddington, p. 343.

for freethought. Ultimately his method undermined his creed; and it is not too much to say of him that, next to Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo,[1] he laid a good part of the foundation of modern philosophy and science,[2] Gassendi largely aiding. Though he never does justice to Galileo, from his fear of provoking the Church, it can hardly be doubted that he owes to him in large part the early determination of his mind to scientific methods; for it is difficult to believe that the account he gives of his mental development in the *Discours de la Méthode* (1637) is biographically true. It is rather the schemed statement, by a ripened mind, of how it might best have been developed. Nor did Descartes, any more than Bacon, live up to the intellectual idea he had framed. All through his life he anxiously sought to propitiate the Church;[3] and his scientific as well as his philosophic work was hampered in consequence. In England Henry More, who latterly recoiled from his philosophy, still thought his physics had been spoiled by fear of the Church, declaring that the imprisonment of Galileo "frighted Des Cartes into such a distorted description of motion that no man's reason could make good sense of it, nor modesty permit him to fancy anything nonsense in so excellent an author."[4]

But nonetheless the unusual rationalism of Descartes's method, avowedly aiming at the uprooting of all his own prejudices[5] as a first step to truth, displeased the Jesuits, and could not escape the hostile attention of the Protestant theologians of Holland, where Descartes passed so many years of his life. Despite his constant theism, accordingly, he had at length to withdraw.[6] A Jesuit, Père Bourdin, sought to have the *Discours de la Méthode* at once condemned by the French clergy, but the attempt failed for the time being. France was just then, in fact, the most freethinking part of Europe;[7] and Descartes, though not so unsparing with his prejudices as he set out to be, was the greatest innovator in philosophy that had arisen in the Christian era. He made real scientific discoveries,

[1] "In many respects Galileo deserves to be ranked with Descartes as inaugurating modern philosophy." Prof. Adamson, *Development of Mod. Philos.* 1903, i, 5. "We may compare his [Hobbes's] thought with Descartes's, but the impulse came to him from the physical reasonings of Galileo." Prof. Croom Robertson, *Hobbes*, 1886, p. 42.

[2] Buckle, 1-vol. ed. pp. 327–36; 3-vol. ed. ii, 77–85. Cp. Lange, i, 425 (Eng. tr. i, 248, *note*); Adamson, *Philosophy of Kant*, 1879, p. 194.

[3] Cp. Lange, i, 425 (Eng. tr. i, 248–49, *note*); Bouillier, *Hist. de la philos. cartésienne*, 1854, i, 40–47, 185–86; Bartholmèss, *Jordano Bruno*, i, 354–55; Memoir in Garnier ed. of *Œuvres Choisies*, p. v, also pp. 6, 17, 19, 21. Bossuet pronounced the precautions of Descartes excessive. But cp. Dr. Land's notes in *Spinoza: Four Essays*, 1882, p. 55.

[4] *Coll. of Philos. Writings*, ed. 1712, pref. p. xi.

[5] *Discours de la Méthode*, pties. i, ii, iii, iv (*Œuvres Choisies*, pp. 8, 10, 11, 22, 24); *Meditation I* (*id.* pp. 73–74).

[6] Full details in Kuno Fischer's *Descartes and his School*, Eng. tr. 1890, bk. i, ch. vi; Bouillier, i, chs. xii, xiii.

[7] Buckle, 1-vol. ed. pp. 337–39; 3-vol. ed. ii, 94, 97.

too, where Bacon only inspired an approach and schemed a wandering road to them. He first effectively applied algebra to geometry; he first scientifically explained the rainbow; he at once accepted and founded on Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood, which most physiologists of the day derided; and he welcomed Aselli's discovery of the lacteals, which was rejected by Harvey.[1] And though as regards religion his timorous conformities deprive him of any heroic status, it is perhaps not too much to pronounce him "the great reformer and liberator of the European intellect."[2] One not given to warm sympathy with freethought has avowed that "the common root of modern philosophy is the doubt which is alike Baconian and Cartesian."[3]

Only less important, in some regards, was the influence of Pierre Gassend or GASSENDI (1592–1655), who, living his life as a canon of the Church, reverted in his doctrine to the philosophy of Epicurus, alike in physics and ethics.[4] It seems clear that he never had any religious leanings, but simply entered the Church on the advice of friends who pointed out to him how much better a provision it gave, in income and leisure, than the professorship he held in his youth at the university of Aix.[5] Professing like Descartes a strict submission to the Church, he yet set forth a theory of things which had in all ages been recognized as fundamentally irreconcilable with the Christian creed; and his substantial exemption from penalties is to be set down to his position, his prudence, and his careful conformities. The correspondent of Galileo and Kepler, he was the friend of La Mothe le Vayer and Naudé; and Gui Patin was his physician and intimate.[6] Strong as a physicist and astronomer where Descartes was weak, he divides with him and Galileo the credit of practically renewing natural philosophy; Newton being Gassendist rather than Cartesian.[7] Indeed, Gassendi's youthful attack on the Aristotelian physics (1624) makes him the predecessor of Descartes; and he expressly opposed his contemporary on points of physics and metaphysics on which he thought him chimerical, and so promoted unbelief where Descartes

[1] Buckle, pp. 327–30; ii, 81. [2] *Id.* p. 330; ii, 82. The process is traced hereinafter.
[3] Kuno Fischer, *Francis Bacon*, Eng. tr. 1857, p. 74.
[4] For an exact summary and criticism of Gassendi's positions see the masterly monograph of Prof. Brett of Lahore, *The Philosophy of Gassendi*, 1908—a real contribution to the history of philosophy.
[5] Cp. Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, bk. v, ch. i (McCulloch's ed. 1839, pp. 364–65). It is told of him, with doubtful authority, that when dying he said: "I know not who brought me into the world, neither do I know what was to do there, nor why I go out of it." *Reflections on the Death of Freethinkers*, by Deslandes (Eng. tr. of the *Réflexions sur les grands hommes qui sont morts en plaisantant*), 1713, p. 105.
[6] For a good account of Gassendi and his group (founded on Lange, § iii, ch. i) see Soury, *Bréviaire de l'hist. de matérialisme*, ptie. iii, ch. ii.
[7] Voltaire, *Éléments de philos. de Newton*, ch. ii; Lange, i, 232 (Eng. tr. i, 267) and 269.

made for orthodoxy.[1] Of the criticisms on his *Méditations* to which Descartes published replies, those of Gassendi are, with the partial exception of those of Hobbes, distinctly the most searching and sustained. The later position of Hume, indeed, is explicitly taken up in the first objection of Cratérus ;[2] but the persistent pressure of Gassendi on the theistic and spiritistic assumptions of Descartes reads like the reasoning of a modern atheist.[3] Yet the works of Descartes were in time placed on the *Index*, condemned by the king's council, and even vetoed in the universities, while those of Gassendi were not, though his early work on Aristotelianism had to be stopped after the first volume because of the anger it aroused.[4] Himself one of the most abstemious of men,[5] like his master Epicurus (of whom he wrote a Life, 1647), he attracted disciples of another temperamental cast as well as many of his own ; and as usual his system is associated with the former, who are duly vilified by orthodoxy, although certainly no worse than the average orthodox.

Among his other practical services to rationalism was a curious experiment, made in a village of the Lower Alps, by way of investigating the doctrine of witchcraft. A drug prepared by one sorcerer was administered to others of the craft in presence of witnesses. It threw them into a deep sleep, on awakening from which they declared that they had been at a witches' Sabbath. As they had never left their beds, the experiment went far to discredit the superstition.[6] One significant result of the experiment was seen in the course later taken by Colbert in overriding a decision of the Parlement of Rouen as to witchcraft (1670). That Parlement proposed to burn fourteen sorcerers. Colbert, who had doubtless read Montaigne as well as Gassendi, gave Montaigne's prescription that the culprits should be dosed with hellebore—a medicine for brain disturbance.[7] In 1672, finally, the king issued a declaration forbidding the tribunals to admit charges of mere sorcery ;[8] and any future condemnations were on the score of blasphemy and poisoning. Yet further, in the section of his posthumous *Syntagma Philosophicum* (1658) entitled *De Effectibus Siderum*,[9] Gassendi dealt the

[1] Bayle, art. POMPONACE, Notes F. and G. The complaint was made by Arnauld, who with the rest of the Jansenists was substantially a Cartesian.
[2] See it in Garnier's ed. of Descartes's *Œuvres Choisies*, p. 145.
[3] *Id.* pp. 158–64.
[4] Apparently just because the Jansenists adopted Descartes and opposed Gassendi. But Gassendi is extremely guarded in all his statements, save, indeed, in his objections to the *Méditations* of Descartes.
[5] See Soury, pp. 397–98, as to a water-drinking "debauch" of Gassendi and his friends.
[6] Rambaud, as cited, p. 154. [7] *Id.* p. 155.
[8] Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XIV*, ed. Didot, p. 366. "On ne l'eût pas osé sous Henri IV et sous Louis XIII," adds Voltaire. Cp. Michelet, *La Sorcière*, éd. Séailles, 1903, p. 302.
[9] Tr. into English in 1659, under the title *The Vanity of Judiciary Astrology*.

first great blow on the rationalist side to the venerable creed of astrology, assailed often, but to little purpose, from the side of faith; bringing to his task, indeed, more asperity than he is commonly credited with, but also a stringent scientific and logical method, lacking in the polemic of the churchmen, who had attacked astrology mainly because it ignored revelation. It is sobering to remember, however, that he was one of those who could not assimilate Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood, which Descartes at once adopted and propounded.

Such anomalies meet us many times in the history of scientific as of other lines of thought; and the residual lesson is the recognition that progress is infinitely multiplex in its causation. Nothing is more vital in this regard than scientific truth, which is as a lighthouse in seas of speculation; and those who, like Galileo and Descartes, add to the world's exact knowledge, perform a specific service not matched by that of the Bacons, who urge right method without applying it. Yet in that kind also an incalculable influence has been wielded. Many minds can accept scientific truths without being thereby led to scientific ways of thought; and thus the reasoners and speculators, the Brunos and the Vaninis, play their fruitful part, as do the mentors who turn men's eyes on their own vices of intellectual habit. And in respect of creeds and philosophies, finally, it is not so much sheer soundness of result as educativeness of method, effectual appeal to the thinking faculty and to the spirit of reason, that determines a thinker's influence. This kind of impact we shall find historically to be the service done by Descartes to European thought for a hundred years.

From Descartes, then, as regards philosophy, more than from any professed thinker of his day, but also from the other thinkers we have noted, from the reactions of scientific discovery, from the terrible experience of the potency of religion as a breeder of strife and its impotence as a curber of evil, and from the practical freethinking of the more open-minded of that age in general, derives the great rationalistic movement, which, taking clear literary form first in the seventeenth century, has with some fluctuations broadened and deepened down to our own day.

Chapter XIV

BRITISH FREETHOUGHT IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

§ 1

The propagandist literature of deism begins with an English diplomatist, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, the friend of Bacon, who stood in the full stream of the current freethought of England and France[1] in the first quarter of the seventeenth century. English deism, as literature, is thus at its very outset affiliated with French; all of its elements, critical and ethical, are germinal in Bodin, Montaigne, and Charron, each and all of whom had a direct influence on English thought; and we shall find later French thought, as in the cases of Gassendi, Bayle, Simon, St. Evremond, and Voltaire, alternately influenced by and reacting on English. But, apart from the undeveloped rationalism of the Elizabethan period, which never found literary expression, the French ferment seems to have given the first effective impulse; though it is to be remembered that about the same time the wars of religion in Germany, following on an age of theological uproar, had developed a common temper of indifferentism which would react on the thinking of men of affairs in France.

We have seen the state of upper-class and middle-class opinion in France about 1624. It was in Paris in that year that Herbert published his *De Veritate*, after acting for five years as the English ambassador at the French court—an office from which he was recalled in the same year.[2] By his own account the book had been "begun by me in England, and formed there in all its principal parts,"[3] but finished at Paris. He had, however, gone to France in 1608, and had served in various continental wars in the years following; and it was presumably in these years, not in his youth in England, that he had formed the remarkable opinions set forth in his epoch-making book.

[1] Jenkin Thomasius in his *Historia Atheismi* (1692) joins Herbert with Bodin as having five points in common with him (ed. 1709, ch. ix, § 2, pp. 76–77).

[2] It might have been supposed that he was recalled on account of his book; but it was not so. He was recalled by letter in April, returned home in July, and seems to have sent his book thence to Paris to be printed.

[3] *Autobiography*, Sir S. Lee's 2nd ed. p. 132.

Hitherto deism had been represented by unpublished arguments disingenuously dealt with in published answers; henceforth there slowly grows up a deistic literature. Herbert was a powerful and audacious nobleman, with a weak king; and he could venture on a publication which would have cost an ordinary man dear. Yet even he saw fit to publish in Latin; and he avowed hesitations.[1] The most puzzling thing about it is his declaration that Grotius and the German theologian Tielenus, having read the book in MS., exhorted him "earnestly to print and publish it." It is difficult to believe that they had gathered its substance. Herbert's work has two aspects, a philosophical and a political, and in both it is remarkable.[2] Like the *Discours de la Méthode* of Descartes, which was to appear thirteen years later, it is inspired by an original determination to get at the rational grounds of conviction; and in Herbert's case the overweening self-esteem which disfigures his *Autobiography* seems to have been motive force for the production of a book signally recalcitrant to authority. Where Bacon attacks Aristotelianism and the habits of mind it had engendered, Herbert counters the whole conception of revelation in religion. Rejecting tacitly the theological basis of current philosophy, he divides the human mind into four faculties—Natural Instinct, Internal Sense, External Sense, and the Discursive faculty—through one or other of which all our knowledge emerges. Of course, like Descartes, he makes the first the verification of his idea of God, pronouncing that to be primary, independent, and universally entertained, and therefore not lawfully to be disputed (already a contradiction in terms); but, inasmuch as scriptural revelation has no place in the process, the position is conspicuously more advanced than that of Bacon in the *De Augmentis*, published the year before, and even than that of Locke, sixty years later. On the question of concrete religion Herbert is still more aggressive. His argument[3] is, in brief, that no professed revelation can have a decisive claim to rational acceptance; that none escapes sectarian dispute in its own field; that, as each one misses most of the human race, none seems to be divine; and that human reason can do for morals all that any one of them does. The negative generalities of Montaigne here pass into a positive anti-Christian argument; for Herbert goes on to pronounce the doctrine of forgiveness for faith immoral.

[1] The book was reprinted at London in Latin in 1633; again at Paris in 1636; and again at London in 1645. It was translated and published in French in 1639, but never in English.
[2] Compare the verdict of Hamilton in his ed. of Reid, note A, § 6, 35 (p. 781).
[3] For a good analysis see Pünjer, *Hist. of the Christ. Philos. of Religion*, Eng. trans. 1887, pp. 292–99; also Noack, *Die Freidenker in der Religion*, Bern, 1853, i, 17–40; and Lechler, *Geschichte des englischen Deismus*, pp. 36–54.

Like all pioneers, Herbert falls into some inconsistencies on his own part; the most flagrant being his claim to have had a sign from heaven—that is, a private and special revelation—encouraging him to publish his book.[1] But his criticism is nonetheless telling and persuasive so far as it goes, and remains valid to this day. Nor do his later and posthumous works[2] add to it in essentials, though they do much to construct the deistic case on historical lines. The *De religione gentilium* in particular is a noteworthy study of pre-Christian religions, apparently motived by doubt or challenge as to his theorem of the universality of the God-idea. It proves only racial universality without agreement; but it is so far a scholarly beginning of rational hierology. The English *Dialogue between a Teacher and his Pupil*, which seems to have been the first form of the *Religio Gentilium*,[3] is a characteristic expression of his whole way of thought, and was doubtless left unpublished for the prudential reasons which led him to put all his published works in Latin. But the fact that the Latin quotations are translated shows that the book had been planned for publication—a risk which he did wisely to shun. The remarkable thing is that his Latin books were so little debated, the *De Veritate* being nowhere discussed before Culverwel.[4] Baxter in 1672 could say that Herbert, "never having been answered, might be thought unanswerable";[5] and his own "answer" is merely theological.

The next great freethinking figure in England is THOMAS HOBBES (1588–1679), the most important thinker of his age, after Descartes, and hardly less influential. But the purpose of Hobbes being always substantially political and regulative, his unfaith in the current religion is only incidentally revealed in the writings in which he seeks to show the need for keeping it under monarchic control.[6] Hobbes is in fact the anti-Presbyterian or anti-Puritan philosopher; and to discredit anarchic religion in the eyes of the majority he is obliged to speak as a judicial Churchman. Yet nothing is more certain than that he was no orthodox Christian;

[1] See his *Autobiography*, as cited, pp. 133-34.

[2] *De causis errorum, una cum tractate de religione laici et appendice ad sacerdotes* (1645); *De religione gentilium* (1663). The latter was translated into English in 1705. The former are short appendices to the *De Veritate*. In 1768 was published for the first time from a manuscript, *A Dialogue between a Tutor and his Pupil*, which, despite the doubts of Lechler, may confidently be pronounced Herbert's from internal evidence. See the "Advertisement" by the editor of the volume, and cp. Lee, p. xxx, and notes there referred to. The "five points," in particular, occur not only in the *Religio Gentilium*, but in the *De Veritate*. The style is clearly of the seventeenth century.

[3] Sir Sidney Lee can hardly be right in taking the *Dialogue* to be the "little treatise" which Herbert proposed to write on behaviour (*Autobiography*, Lee's 2nd ed. p. 43). It does not answer to that description, being rather an elaborate discussion of the themes of Herbert's main treatises, running to 272 quarto pages.

[4] See below, p. 80. [5] *More Reasons for the Christian Religion*, 1672, p. 79.

[6] It is to be remembered that the doctrine of the supremacy of the civil power in religious matters (Erastianism) was maintained by some of the ablest men on the Parliamentary side, in particular Selden.

and even his professed theism resolves itself somewhat easily into virtual agnosticism on logical pressure. No thought of prudence could withhold him from showing, in a discussion on words, that he held the doctrine of the *Logos* to be meaningless.[1] Of atheism he was repeatedly accused by both royalists and rebels; and his answer was forensic rather than fervent, alike as to his scripturalism, his Christianity, and his impersonal conception of Deity.[2] Reviving as he did the ancient rationalistic doctrine of the eternity of the world,[3] he gave a clear footing for atheism as against the Judæo-Christian view. In affirming "one God eternal" of whom men "cannot have any idea in their mind, answerable to his nature," he was negating all creeds. He expressly contends, it is true, for the principle of a Providence; but it is hard to believe that he laid any store by prayer, public or private; and it would appear that whatever thoughtful atheism there was in England in the latter part of the century looked to him as its philosopher, insofar as it did not derive from Spinoza.[4] Nor could the Naturalist school of that day desire a better, terser, or more drastic scientific definition of religion than Hobbes gave them: "Fear of power invisible, *feigned by the mind or imagined from tales publicly allowed*, RELIGION; *not allowed*, SUPERSTITION."[5] As the Churchmen readily saw, his insistence on identifying the religion of a country with its law plainly implied that no religion is any more "revealed" than another. With him too begins (1651) the public criticism of the Bible on literary or documentary grounds;[6] though, as we have seen, this had already gone far in private;[7] and he gave a new lead, partly as against Descartes, to a materialistic philosophy.[8] His replies to the theistic and spiritistic reasonings of Descartes's *Méditations* are, like those of Gassendi, unrefuted and irrefutable; and they are fundamentally materialistic in their drift.[9] He was, in fact, in a special and peculiar degree for his age, a freethinker; and so deep was his intellectual hostility to the clergy of all species that he could not forego enraging those of his own political side by his sarcasms.[10]

[1] *Leviathan*, ch. iv, H. Morley's ed. p. 26.

[2] Cp. his letter to an opponent, *Considerations upon the Reputation, etc., of Thomas Hobbes*, 1680, with chs. xi and xii of *Leviathan*, and *De Corpore Politico*, pt. ii, c. 6. One of his most explicit declarations for theism is in the *De Homine*, c. 1, where he employs the design argument, declaring that he who will not see that the bodily organs are *a mente aliqua conditas ordinatasque ad sua quasque officia* must be himself without mind. This ascription of "mind," however, he tacitly negates in *Leviathan*, ch. xi, and *De Corpore Politico*, pt. ii, c. 6.

[3] *De Corpore*, pt. ii, c. 8, § 20.

[4] Cp. Bentley's letter to Bernard, 1692, cited in *Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 82–83.

[5] *Leviathan*, pt. i, ch. vi. Morley's ed. p. 34.

[6] *Leviathan*, pt. iii, ch. xxxiii.

[7] Above, p. 24.

[8] On this see Lange, *Hist. of Materialism*, sec. iii, ch. ii.

[9] Molyneux, an anti-Hobbesian, in translating Hobbes's objections along with the *Meditations* (1680) claims that the slightness of Descartes's replies was due to his unacquaintance with Hobbes's works and philosophy in general (trans. cited, p. 114). This is an obviously lame defence. Descartes does parry some of the thrusts of Hobbes; others he simply cannot meet.

[10] *E.g.*, *Leviathan*, pt. iv, ch. xlvii.

Here he is in marked contrast with Descartes, who dissembled his opinion about Copernicus and Galileo for peace' sake,[1] and was the close friend of the apologist Mersenne down to his death.[2]

With the partial exception of the more refined and graceful Pecock, Hobbes has of all English thinkers down to his period the clearest and hardest head for all purposes of reasoning, save in the single field of mathematics, where he meddled without mastery; and against the theologians of his time his argumentation is as a two-edged sword. That such a man should have been resolutely on the side of the king in the Civil War is one of the proofs of the essential fanaticism and arbitrariness of the orthodox Puritans, who plotted more harm to the heresies they disliked than was ever wreaked on themselves. Hobbes came near enough being clerically ostracized among the royalists; but among the earlier Puritans, or under an Independent Puritan Parliament at any time, he would have stood a fair chance of execution. It was doubtless largely due to the anti-persecuting influence of Cromwell, as well as to his having ostensibly deserted the royalists, that Hobbes was allowed to settle quietly in England after making his submission to the Rump Parliament in 1651. In 1666 his *Leviathan* and *De Cive* were together condemned by the Restoration Parliament in its grotesque panic of piety after the Great Fire of London; and it was actually proposed to revive against him the writ *de heretico comburendo*;[3] but Charles II protected and pensioned him, though he was forbidden to publish anything further on burning questions, and *Leviathan* was not permitted in his lifetime to be republished in English.[4] He was thus for his generation the typical "infidel," the royalist clergy being perhaps his bitterest enemies. His spontaneous hostility to fanaticism shaped his literary career, which began in 1628 with a translation of Thucydides, undertaken by way of showing the dangers of democracy. Next came the *De Cive* (Paris, 1642), written when he was already an elderly man; and thenceforth the Civil War tinges his whole temper.

It is in fact by way of a revolt against all theological ethic, as demonstrably a source of civil anarchy, that Hobbes formulates

[1] Kuno Fischer, *Descartes and his School*, pp. 232-35. Cp. Bentley, *Sermons on Atheism* (*i.e.*, his Boyle Lectures), ed. 1724, p. 8.

[2] Hobbes also was of Mersenne's acquaintance, but only as a man of science. When, in 1647, Hobbes was believed to be dying, Mersenne for the first time sought to discuss theology with him; but the sick man instantly changed the subject. In 1648 Mersenne died. He thus did not live to meet the strain of *Leviathan* (1651), which enraged the French no less than the English clergy. (Croom Robertson's *Hobbes*, pp. 63-65.)

[3] Hobbes lived to see this law abolished (1677). There was left, however, the jurisdiction of the bishops and ecclesiastical courts over cases of atheism, blasphemy, heresy, and schism, short of the death penalty.

[4] Croom Robertson, *Hobbes*, p. 196; Pepys's Diary, Sept. 3, 1668.

a strictly civic or legalist ethic, denying the supremacy of an abstract or à priori natural moral law (though he founded on natural law), as well as rejecting all supernatural illumination of the conscience.[1] In the Church of Rome itself there had inevitably arisen the practice of Casuistry, in which to a certain extent ethics had to be rationally studied; and early Protestant Casuistry, repudiating the authority of the priest, had to rely still more on reason.

> Compare Whewell, *Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy*, ed. 1862, pp. 25–38, where it is affirmed that, after the Reformation, "Since the assertions of the teacher had no inherent authority, he was obliged to give his proofs as well as his results," and "the determination of *cases* was replaced by the discipline of *conscience*" (p. 29). There is an interesting progression in English Protestant casuistry from W. Perkins (1558–1602) and W. Ames (pub. 1630), through Bishops Hall and Sanderson, to Jeremy Taylor. Mosheim (17 Cent. sec. ii, pt. ii, § 9) pronounces Ames "the first among the Reformed who attempted to elucidate and arrange the science of morals as distinct from that of dogmatics." See biog. notes on Perkins and Ames in Whewell, pp. 27–29, and Reid's Mosheim, p. 681.

But Hobbes passed in two strides to the position that natural morality is a set of demonstrable inferences as to what adjustments promote general well-being; and further that there is no practical code of right and wrong apart from positive social law.[2] He thus practically introduced once for all into modern Christendom the fundamental dilemma of rationalistic ethics, not only positing the problem for his age,[3] but anticipating it as handled in later times.[4]

How far his rationalism was ahead of that of his age may be realized by comparing his positions with those of John Selden, the most learned and, outside of philosophy, one of the shrewdest of the men of that generation. Selden was sometimes spoken of by the Hobbists as a freethinker; and his *Table Talk* contains some sallies which would startle the orthodox if publicly delivered;[5] but not only is there explicit testimony by his associates as to his orthodoxy:[6] his own treatise, *De Jure Naturali et Gentium juxta disciplinam Ebræorum*, maintains the ground that the "Law of Nature" which underlies the variants of the Laws of Nations is limited to the

[1] *Leviathan*, ch. ii; Morley's ed. p. 19; chs. xiv, xv, pp. 66, 71, 72, 78; ch. xxix, pp. 148, 149.

[2] *Leviathan*, chs. xv, xvii, xviii. Morley's ed. pp. 72, 82, 83, 85.

[3] "For two generations the effort to construct morality on a philosophical basis takes more or less the form of answers to Hobbes" (Sidgwick, *Outlines of the History of Ethics*, 3rd ed. p. 169).

[4] As when he presents the law of Nature as "dictating peace, for a means of the conservation of men in multitudes" (*Leviathan*, ch. xv. Morley's ed. p. 77).

[5] See the headings, COUNCIL, RELIGION, etc.

[6] G. W. Johnson, *Memoirs of John Selden*, 1835, pp. 348, 362.

precepts and traditions set forth in the Talmud as delivered by Noah to his posterity.[1] Le Clerc said of the work, justly enough, that in it "Selden only copies the Rabbins, and scarcely ever reasons." It is likely enough that the furious outcry against Selden for his strictly historical investigation of tithes, and the humiliation of apology forced upon him in that connection in 1618,[2] made him specially chary ever afterwards of any semblance of a denial of the plenary truth of theological tradition; but there is no reason to think that he had ever really transcended the Biblical view of the world's order. He illustrates, in fact, the extent to which a scholar could in that day be anti-clerical without being rationalistic. Like the bulk of the Parliamentarians, though without their fanaticism, he was thoroughly opposed to the political pretensions of the Church,[3] desiring however to leave episcopacy alone, as a matter outside of legislation, when the House of Commons abolished it. Yet he spoke of the name of Puritan as one which he "trusted he was not either mad enough or foolish enough to deserve."[4] There were thus in the Parliamentary party men of very different shades of opinion. The largest party, perhaps, was that of the fanatics who, as Mrs. Hutchinson—herself fanatical enough—tells concerning her husband, "would not allow him to be religious because his hair was not in their cut."[5] Next in strength were the more or less orthodox but anti-clerical and less pious Scripturalists, of whom Selden was the most illustrious. By far the smallest group of all were the freethinkers, men of their type being as often repelled by the zealotry of the Puritans as by the sacerdotalism of the State clergy. The Rebellion, in short, though it evoked rationalism, was not evoked by it. Like all religious strifes—like the vaster Thirty Years' War in contemporary Germany—it generated both doubt and indifferentism in men who would otherwise have remained undisturbed in orthodoxy.

§ 2

When, however, we turn from the higher literary propaganda to the verbal and other transitory debates of the period of the Rebellion, we realize how much partial rationalism had hitherto subsisted without notice. In that immense ferment some very advanced opinions, such as quasi-Anarchism in politics[6] and anti-

[1] G. W. Johnson, p. 264. [2] Above, p. 20. [3] G. W. Johnson, pp. 258, 302.
[4] *Id.* p. 302. Cp. in the *Table Talk*, art. TRINITY, his view of the Roundheads.
[5] *Memoirs of Colonel Hutchinson*, ed. 1810, i, 181. Cp. i, 292; ii, 44.
[6] Cp. Overton's pamphlet, *An Arrow against all Tyrants and Tyranny* (1646), cited in the *History of Passive Obedience since the Reformation*, 1689, i, 59; pt. ii of Thomas

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Scripturalism in religion, were more or less directly professed. In January, 1646 (N.S.), the authorities of the City of London, alarmed at the unheard-of amount of discussion, petitioned Parliament to put down all private meetings;[1] and on February 6, 1646 (N.S.), a solemn fast, or "day of publique humiliation," was proclaimed on the score of the increase of "errors, heresies, and blasphemies." On the same grounds, the Presbyterian party in Parliament pressed an "Ordinance for the *suppression* of Blasphemies and Heresies," which, long held back by Vane and Cromwell, was carried in their despite in 1648, by large majorities, when the royalists renewed hostilities. It enacted the death penalty against all who should deny the doctrine of the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, the inspiration of the Bible, a day of judgment, or a future state; and prescribed imprisonment for Arminianism, rejection of infant baptism, anti-Sabbatarianism, anti-Presbyterianism, or defence of the doctrine of Purgatory or the use of images.[2] And of aggressive heresy there are some noteworthy traces. In a pamphlet entitled "*Hell Broke Loose:* a Catalogue of the many spreading Errors, Heresies, and Blasphemies of these Times, for which we are to be humbled" (March 9, 1646, N.S.), the first entry—and in the similar Catalogue in Edwards's *Gangræna*, the second entry—is a citation of the notable thesis, "That the Scripture, whether a true manuscript or no, whether Hebrew, Greek, or English, is but humane, and not able to discover a divine God."[3] This is cited from "The Pilgrimage of the Saints, by Lawrence Clarkson," presumably the Lawrence Clarkson who for his book *The Single Eye* was sentenced by resolution of Parliament on September 27, 1650, to be imprisoned, the book being burned by the common hangman.[4] He is further cited as teaching that even unbaptized persons may preach and baptize. Of the other heresies cited the principal is the old denial of a future life, and especially of a physical and future hell. In general the heresy is pietistic or antinomian; but we have also the declaration "that right Reason is the rule of Faith, and that we are to believe the Scriptures and the doctrine of the Trinity, Incarnation, Resurrection, so far as we

Edwards's *Gangræna: or a Catalogue and Discovery of many of the Errours, Heresies, Blasphemies, and pernicious Practices of the Sectaries of this time*, etc., 2nd ed. 1646, pp. 33–34 (Nos. 151–53).

[1] *Lords Journals*, January 16, 1645–1646; *Gangræna*, as cited, p. 150; cp. Gardiner, *Hist. of the Civil War*, ed. 1893, iii, 11.

[2] Green, *Short Hist.* ch. viii, § 8, pp. 551–52; Gardiner, *Hist. of the Civil War*, iv, 22.

[3] *Gangræna*, p. 18.

[4] In 1644 he had been imprisoned at Bury St. Edmunds for "dipping" adults, and after six months' durance had been released on a recantation and promise of amendment. *Gangræna*, as cited, pp. 104–105.

see them to be agreeable to reason and no further." Concerning Jesus there are various heresies, from simple Unitarianism to contemptuous disparagement, with the stipulation for a "Christ formed in us." But though there are cases of unquotable or ribald blasphemy there is little trace of scholarly criticism of the Bible, of reasoning against miracles or the inconsistencies of Scripture, as apart from the doctrine of deity. Nonetheless, it is very credible that "multitudes, unsettled.....have changed their faith, either to Scepticisme, to doubt of everything, or Atheisme, to believe nothing."[1]

Against the furious intolerance of the Puritan legislature some pleaded with new zeal for tolerance all round; arguing that certainty on articles of faith and points of religion was impossible—a doctrine promptly classed as a bad heresy.[2] The plea that toleration would mean concord was met by the confident and not unfounded retort that the "sectaries" would themselves persecute if they could.[3] But this could hardly have been true of all. Notable among the new parties were the Levellers, who insisted that the State should leave religion entirely alone, tolerating all creeds, including even atheism; and who put forward a new and striking ethic, grounding on "universal reason" the right of all men to the soil.[4] In the strictly theological field the most striking innovation, apart from simple Unitarianism, is the denial of the eternity or even the existence of future torments—a position first taken up, as we have seen, either by the continental Socinians or by the unnamed English heretics of the Tudor period, who passed on their heresy to the time of Marlowe.[5] In this connection the learned booklet[6] entitled *Of the Torments of Hell: the foundations and pillars thereof discover'd, search'd, shaken, and removed* (1658) was rightly thought worth translating into French by d'Holbach over a century later.[7] It is an argument on scriptural lines, denying that the conception of a place of eternal torment is either scriptural or credible; and pointing out that many had explained it in a "spiritual" sense.

Humane feeling of this kind counted for much in the ferment; but a contrary hate was no less abundant. The Presbyterian Thomas Edwards, who in a vociferous passion of fear and zeal set

1 Rev. James Cranford, *Hæreseo-Machia*, a Sermon, 1646, p. 10.
2 No. 100 in *Gangræna*.
3 Cranford, as cited, p. 11 *sq.*
4 See G. P. Gooch's *Hist. of Democ. Ideas in England in the 17th Century*, 1898, ch. vi.
5 Above, pp. 4 and 8.
6 In the British Museum copy the name Richardson is penned, not in a contemporary hand, at the end of the preface; and in the preface to vol. ii of the *Phenix*, 1708, in which the treatise is reprinted, the same name is given, but with uncertainty. The Richardson pointed at was the author of *The Necessity of Toleration in Matters of Religion* (1647). E. B. Underhill, in his collection of that and other *Tracts on Liberty of Conscience* for the Hanserd Knollys Society, 1846, remains doubtful (p. 247) as to the authorship of the tract on hell.
7 The fourth English edition appeared in 1754.

himself to catalogue the host of heresies that threatened to overwhelm the times, speaks of "monsters" unheard-of theretofore, "now common among us—as denying the Scriptures, pleading for a toleration of all religions and worships, yea, for blasphemy, and denying there is a God."[1] "A Toleration," he declares, "is the grand design of the Devil, his masterpiece and chief engine"; "every day now brings forth books for a Toleration."[2] Among the 180 sects named by him[3] there were "Libertines," "Antiscripturists," "Skeptics and Questionists,"[4] who held nothing save the doctrine of free speech and liberty of conscience;[5] as well as Socinians, Arians, and Anti-trinitarians; and he speaks of serious men who had not only abandoned their religious beliefs, but sought to persuade others to do the same.[6] Under the rule of Cromwell, tolerant as he was of Christian sectarianism, and even of Unitarianism as represented by Biddle, the more advanced heresies would get small liberty; though that of Thomas Muggleton and John Reeve, which took shape about 1651 as the Muggletonian sect, does not seem to have been molested. Muggleton, a mystic, could teach that there was no devil or evil spirit, save in "man's spirit of unclean reason and cursed imagination";[7] but it was only privately that such men as Henry Marten and Thomas Chaloner, the regicides, could avow themselves to be of "the natural religion." The statement of Bishop Burnet, following Clarendon, that "many of the republicans began to profess deism," cannot be taken literally, though it is broadly intelligible that "almost all of them were for destroying all clergymen.....and for leaving religion free, as they called it, without either encouragement or restraint."

> See Burnet's *History of His Own Time*, bk. i, ed. 1838, p. 43. The phrase, "They were for pulling down the churches," again, cannot be taken literally. Of those who "pretended to little or no religion and acted only upon the principles of civil liberty," Burnet goes on to name Sidney, Henry Nevill, Marten, Wildman, and Harrington. The last was certainly of Hobbes's way of thinking in philosophy (Croom Robertson, *Hobbes*, p. 223, *note*); but Wildman was one of the signers of the Anabaptist petition to Charles II in 1658 (Clarendon, *Hist. of the Rebellion*,

[1] *Gangræna*, ep. ded. (p. 5). Cp. pp. 47, 151, 178–79; and Bailie's *Letters*, ed. 1841, ii, 234–37; iii, 393. The most sweeping plea for toleration seems to have been the book entitled *Toleration Justified*, 1646. (*Gangræna*, p. 151.) The Hanserd Knollys collection, above mentioned, does not contain one of that title.

[2] *Gangræna*, pp. 152–53.

[3] Pp. 18–36.

[4] *Id.* p. 15. As to other sects mentioned by him cp. Tayler, p. 194.

[5] On the intense aversion of most of the Presbyterians to toleration see Tayler, *Retrospect of Relig. Life of Eng.* p. 136. They insisted, rightly enough, that the principle was never recognized in the Bible.

[6] See the citations in Buckle, 3-vol. ed. i, 347; 1-vol. ed. p. 196.

[7] Alex. Ross, *Pansebeia*, 4th ed. 1672, p. 379.

bk. xv, ed. 1843, p. 855). As to Marten and Chaloner, see Carlyle's *Cromwell*, iii, 194; and articles in *Nat. Dict. of Biog.* Vaughan (*Hist. of England*, 1840, ii, 477, *note*) speaks of Walwyn and Overton as "among the freethinkers of the times of the Commonwealth." They were, however, Biblicists, not unbelievers. Prof. Gardiner (*Hist. of the Commonwealth and Protectorate*, ii, 253, citing a News-letter in the Clarendon MSS.) finds record in 1653 of "a man [who] preached flat atheism in Westminster Hall, uninterrupted by the soldiers of the guard"; but this obviously counts for little.

Between the advance in speculation forced on by the disputes themselves, and the usual revolt against the theological spirit after a long and ferocious display of it, there spread even under the Commonwealth a new temper of secularity. On the one hand, the temperamental distaste for theology, antinomian or other, took form in the private associations for scientific research which were the antecedents of the Royal Society. On the other hand, the spirit of religious doubt spread widely in the middle and upper classes; and between the dislike of the Roundheads for the established clergy and the anger of the Cavaliers against all Puritanism there was fostered that "contempt of the clergy" which had become a clerical scandal at the Restoration and was to remain so for about a century.[1] Their social status was in general low, and their financial position bad; and these circumstances, possible only in a time of weakened religious belief, necessarily tended to further the process of mental change. Within the sphere of orthodoxy, it operated openly. It is noteworthy that the term "rationalist" emerges as the label of a sect of Independents or Presbyterians who declare that "What their reason dictates to them in church or State stands for good, until they be convinced with better."[2] The "rationalism," so-called, of that generation remained ostensibly scriptural; but on other lines thought went further. Of atheism there are at this stage only dubious biographical and controversial traces, such as Mrs. Hutchinson's characterization of a Nottingham physician, possibly a deist, as a "horrible atheist,"[3] and the Rev. John Dove's *Confutation of Atheism* (1640), which does not bear out its title. Ephraim Pagitt, in his *Heresiography* (1644), speaks loosely of an "atheistical sect who affirm that men's soules sleep with them *until the day of judgment*"; and tells of some alleged atheist merely that he "mocked and jeared at Christ's Incarnation."[4] Similarly a work,

[1] Cp. the present writer's *Buckle and his Critics*, 1895, ch. viii, § 2.
[2] See above, vol. i, p. 5.
[3] *Memoirs of Colonel Hutchinson*, 3rd ed. i, 200.
[4] *Heresiography: The Heretics and Sectaries of these Times*, 1644. Epist. Ded.

entitled *Dispute betwixt an Atheist and a Christian* (1646), shows the existence not of atheists but of deists, and the deist in the dialogue is a Fleming.

More trustworthy is the allusion in Nathaniel Culverwel's *Discourse of the Light of Nature* (written in 1646, published posthumously in 1652) to "those lumps and dunghills of all sects.....that young and upstart generation of gross anti-scripturalists, that have a powder-plot against the Gospel, that would very compendiously behead all Christian religion at one blow, a device which old and ordinary heretics were never acquainted withal."[1] The reference is presumably to the followers of Lawrence Clarkson. Yet even here we have no mention of atheism, which is treated as something almost impossible. Indeed, the very course of arguing in favour of a "Light of Nature" seems to have brought suspicion on Culverwel himself, who shows a noticeable liking for Herbert of Cherbury.[2] He is, however, as may be inferred from his angry tone towards anti-scripturalists, substantially orthodox, and not very important.

It is contended for Culverwel by modern admirers (ed. cited, p. xxi) that he deserves the praise given by Hallam to the later Bishop Cumberland as "the first Christian writer who sought to establish systematically the principle of moral right independent of revelation." [See above, p. 74, the similar tribute of Mosheim to Ames.] But Culverwel does not really make this attempt. His proposition is that reason, "the candle of the Lord," discovers "that all the moral law is founded in natural and common light, in the light of reason, and that there is nothing in the mysteries of the Gospel *contrary* to the light of reason" (Introd. *end*); yet he contends not only that faith transcends reason, but that Abraham's attempt to slay his son was a dutiful obeying of "the God of nature" (pp. 225–26). He does not achieve the simple step of noting that the recognition of revelation as such must be performed by reason, and thus makes no advance on the position of Bacon, much less on those of Pecock and Hooker. His object, indeed, was not to justify orthodoxy by reason against rationalistic unbelief, but to make a case for reason in theology against the Lutherans and others who, "because Socinus has burnt his wings at this candle of the Lord," scouted all use of it (Introd.). Culverwel, however, was one of the learned group in Emanuel College, Cambridge, whose tradition developed in the next generation into Latitudinarianism; and he may be taken as a learned type of a number of the clergy who were led by the abundant discussion all around them into professing and encouraging a ratiocinative habit of mind.

[1] *Discourse*, ed. 1857, p. 226. [2] Dr. J. Brown's pref. to ed. of 1857, p. xxii.

Thus we find Dean Stuart, Clerk of the Closet to Charles I, devoting one of his short homilies to Jerome's text, *Tentemus animas quae deficiunt a fide naturalibus rationibus adjurare.* "It is not enough," he writes, "for you to rest in an imaginary faith, and easiness in beleeving, except yee know also what and why and how you come to that beleef. Implicite beleevers, ignorant beleevers, the adversary may swallow, but the understanding beleever hee must chaw, and pick bones before hee come to assimilate him, and make him like himself. The implicite beleever stands in an open field, and the enemy will ride over him easily: the understanding beleever is in a fenced town." (*Catholique Divinity*, 1657, pp. 133–34—a work written many years earlier.)

The discourse on Atheism, again, in the posthumous works of John Smith of Cambridge (d. 1652), is entirely retrospective; but soon another note is sounded. As early as 1652, the year after the issue of Hobbes's *Leviathan*, the prolific Walter Charleton, who had been physician to the king, published a book entitled *The Darkness of Atheism Expelled by the Light of Nature*, wherein he asserted that England "hath of late produced and doth.....foster more swarms of atheistical monsters.....than any age, than any Nation hath been infested withal." In the following year Henry More, the Cambridge Platonist, published his *Antidote against Atheism.* The flamboyant dedication to Viscountess Conway affirms that the existence of God is "as clearly demonstrable as any theorem in mathematicks"; but, the reverend author adds, "considering the state of things as they are, I cannot but pronounce that there is more necessity of this my Antidote than I could wish there were." At the close of the preface he pleasantly explains that he will use no Biblical arguments, but talk to the atheist as a "mere Naturalist"; inasmuch as "he that converses with a barbarian must discourse to him in his own language," and "he that would gain upon the more weak and sunk minds of sensual mortals is to accommodate himself to their capacity, who, like the bat and owl, can see nowhere so well as in the shady glimmerings of their twilight." Then, after some elementary play with the design argument, the entire Third Book of forty-six folio pages is devoted to a parade of old wives' tales of witches and witchcraft, witches' sabbaths, apparitions, commotions by devils, ghosts, incubi, polter-geists—the whole vulgar medley of the peasant superstitions of Europe.

It is not that the Platonist does violence to his own philosophic tastes by way of influencing the "bats and owls" of atheism. This mass of superstition is his own special pabulum. In the preface

he has announced that, while he may abstain from the use of the Scriptures, nothing shall restrain him from telling what he knows of spirits. "I am so cautious and circumspect," he claims, "that I make use of no narrations that either the avarice of the priest or the credulity and fancifulness of the melancholist may render suspected." As for the unbelievers, "their confident ignorance shall never dash me out of confidence with my well-grounded knowledge; for I have been no careless inquirer into these things." It is after a polter-geist tale of the crassest description that he announces that it was strictly investigated and attested by "that excellently-learned and noble gentleman, Mr. R. Boyle," who avowed "that all his settled indisposedness to believe strange things was overcome by this special conviction."[1] And the section ends with the proposition: "Assuredly that saying is not more true in politick, *No Bishop, no King*, than this in metaphysicks, *No Spirit, no God.*" Such was the mentality of some of the most eminent and scholarly Christian apologists of the time. It seems safe to conclude that the Platonist made few converts.

More avowed that he wrote without having read previous apologists; and others were similarly spontaneous in the defence of the faith. In 1654 there is noted[2] a treatise called *Atheismus Vapulans*, by William Towers, whose message can in part be inferred from his title;[3] and in 1657 Charleton issued his *Immortality of the Human Soul demonstrated by the Light of Nature*, wherein the argument, which says nothing of revelation, is so singularly unconfident, and so much broken in upon by excursus, as to leave it doubtful whether the author was more lacking in dialectic skill or in conviction. And still the traces of unbelief multiply. Baxter and Howe were agreed, in 1658, that there were both "infidels and papists" at work around them; and in 1659 Howe writes: "I know some leading men are not Christians."[4] "Seekers, Vanists, and Behmenists" are specified as groups to which both infidels and papists attach themselves. And Howe, recognizing how religious strifes promote unbelief, bears witness "What a cloudy, wavering, uncertain, lank, spiritless thing is the faith of Christians in this age become!.....Most content themselves to profess it only as the religion of their country."[5]

[1] More, *Collection of Philosophical Writings*, 4th ed. 1692, p. 95.
[2] Fabricius, *Delectus Argumentorum et Syllabus Scriptorum*, 1725, p. 341.
[3] No copy in British Museum.
[4] Urwick, *Life of John Howe*, with 1846 ed. of Howe's Select Works, pp. xiii, xix. Urwick, a learned evangelical, fully admits the presence of "infidels" on both sides in the politics of the time.
[5] *Discourse Concerning Union Among Protestants*, ed. cited, pp. 146, 156, 158. In the preface to his treatise, *The Redeemer's Tears Wept over Lost Souls*, Howe complains of

Alongside of all this vindication of Christianity there was going on constant and cruel persecution of heretic Christians. The Unitarian John Biddle, master of the Gloucester Grammar School, was dismissed for his denial of the Trinity; and in 1647 he was imprisoned, and his book burned by the hangman. In 1654 he was again imprisoned; and in 1655 he was banished to the Scilly Islands. Returning to London after the Restoration, he was again arrested, and died in gaol in 1662.[1] Under the Commonwealth (1656) James Naylor, the Quaker, narrowly escaped death for blasphemy, but was whipped through the streets, pilloried, bored through the tongue with a hot iron, branded in the forehead, and sent to hard labour in prison. Many hundreds of Quakers were imprisoned and more or less cruelly handled.

From the *Origines Sacræ* (1662) of Stillingfleet, nevertheless, it would appear that both deism and atheism were becoming more and more common.[2] He states that "the most popular pretences of the atheists of our age have been the irreconcilableness of the account of times in Scripture with that of the learned and ancient heathen nations, the inconsistency of the belief of the Scriptures with the principles of reason; and the account which may be given of the origin of things from the principles of philosophy without the Scriptures." These positions are at least as natural to deists as to atheists; and Stillingfleet is later found protesting against the policy of some professed Christians who give up the argument from miracles as valueless.[3] His whole treatise, in short, assumes the need for meeting a very widespread unbelief in the Bible, though it rarely deals with the atheism of which it so constantly speaks. After the Restoration, naturally, all the new tendencies were greatly reinforced,[4] alike by the attitude of the king and his companions, all influenced by French culture, and by the general reaction against Puritanism. Whatever ways of thought had been characteristic of the Puritans were now in more or less complete disfavour; the belief in witchcraft was scouted as much on this ground as on any other;[5] and the

"the atheism of some, the avowed mere theism of others," and of a fashionable habit of ridiculing religion. This sermon, however, appears to have been first published in 1684; and the date of its application is uncertain.

[1] Wallace, *Antitrinitarian Biography*, Art. 285.

[2] The preface begins: "It is neither to satisfie the importunity of friends, nor to prevent false copies (which and such like excuses I know are expected in usual prefaces), that I have adventured abroad this following treatise: but it is out of a just resentment of the affronts and indignities which have been cast on religion, by such who account it a matter of judgment to disbelieve the Scriptures, and a piece of wit to dispute themselves out of the possibility of being happy in another world."

[3] See bk. ii, ch. x. Page 338, 3rd ed. 1666.

[4] Cp. Glanvill, pref. *Address* to his *Scepsis Scientifica*, Owen's ed. 1885, pp. lv-lvii; and Henry More's *Divine Dialogues*, Dial. i, ch. xxxii.

[5] Cp. Lecky, *Rationalism in Europe*, i, 109.

deistic doctrines found a ready audience among royalists, whose enemies had been above all things Bibliolaters.

> There is evidence that Charles II, at least up to the time of his becoming a Catholic, and probably even to the end, was at heart a deist. See Burnet's *History of his Own Time*, ed. 1838, pp. 61, 175, and notes; and cp. refs. in Buckle, 3-vol. ed. i, 362, *note;* 1-vol. ed. p. 205. St. Evremond, who knew him and many of his associates, affirmed expressly that Charles's creed "étoit seulement ce qui passe vulgairement, quoiqu' injustement, pour une extinction totale de Religion: je veux dire le Déisme" (*Œuvres mêlées:* t. viii of *Œuvres*, ed. 1714, p. 354). His opinion, St. Evremond admits, was the result of simple recognition of the actualities of religious life, not of reading, or of much reflection. And his adoption of Catholicism, in St. Evremond's opinion, was purely political. He saw that Catholicism made much more than Protestantism for kingly power, and that his Catholic subjects were the most subservient.

We gather this, however, still from the apologetic treatises and the historians, not from new deistic literature; for in virtue of the Press Licensing Act, passed on behalf of the Church in 1662, no heretical book could be printed; so that Herbert was thus far the only professed deistic writer in the field, and Hobbes the only other of similar influence. Baxter, writing in 1655 on *The Unreasonableness of Infidelity*, handles chiefly Anabaptists; and in his *Reformed Pastor* (1656), though he avows that "the common ignorant people," seeing the endless strifes of the clergy, "are hardened by us against all religion," the only specific unbelief he mentions is that of "the devil's own agents, the unhappy Socinians," who had written "so many treatises for.....unity and peace."[1] But in his *Reasons of the Christian Religion*, issued in 1667, he thinks fit to prove the existence of God and a future state, and the truth and the supernatural character of the Christian religion. Any deist or atheist who took the trouble to read through it would have been rewarded by the discovery that the learned author has annihilated his own case. In his first part he affirms: "If there were no life of Retribution after this, Obedience to God would be finally men's loss and ruine: But Obedience to God shall not be finally men's loss and ruine: Ergo, there is another life."[2] In the second part he writes that "Man's personal interest is an unfit rule and measure of God's goodness";[3] and, going on to meet the new argument

[1] *The Reformed Pastor*, abr. ed. 1826, pp. 236, 239.
[2] Work cited, ed. 1667, p. 136. The proposition is reiterated.
[3] *Id.* p. 388.

against Christianity based on the inference that an infinity of stars are inhabited, he writes :—

> Ask any man who knoweth these things whether all this earth be any more in comparison of the whole creation than one Prison is to a Kingdom or Empire, or the paring of one nail.....in comparison of the whole body. And if God should cast off *all this earth*, and use *all the sinners* in it as they deserve, it is no more sign of a want of benignity or mercy in him than it is for a King to cast *one subject* of a *million* into a jail.....or than it is to *pare a man's nails*, or cut off a wart, or a hair, or to pull out a rotten aking tooth.[1]

Thus the second part absolutely destroys one of the fundamental positions of the first. No semblance of levity on the part of the freethinkers could compare with the profound intellectual insincerity of such a propaganda as this; and that deism and atheism continued to gain ground is proved by the multitude of apologetic treatises. Even in church-ridden Scotland they were found necessary; at least the young advocate George Mackenzie, afterwards to be famous as the "bluidy Mackenzie" of the time of persecution, thought it expedient to make his first appearance in literature with a *Religio Stoici* (1663), wherein he sets out with a refutation of atheism. It is difficult to believe that his counsel to Christians to watch the "horror-creating beds of dying atheists"[2]—a false pretence as it stands—represented any knowledge whatever of professed atheism in his own country; and his discussion of the subject is wholly on the conventional lines—notably so when he uses the customary plea, later associated with Pascal, that the theist runs no risk even if there is no future life, whereas the atheist runs a tremendous risk if there is one;[3] but when he writes of "that mystery why the greatest wits are most frequently the greatest atheists,"[4] he must be presumed to refer at least to deists. And other passages show that he had listened to freethinking arguments. Thus he speaks[5] of those who "detract from Scripture by attributing the production of miracles to natural causes"; and again[6] of those who "contend that the Scriptures are written in a mean and low style; are in some places too mysterious, in others too obscure; contain many things incredible, many repetitions, and many contradictions." His own answers are conspicuously weak. In the latter passage he continues: "But those miscreants should consider that much of the Scripture's native splendour is impaired by its translators"; and as to miracles

[1] *Reasons of the Christian Religion*, pp. 388-89.
[2] *Religio Stoici*, Edinburgh, 1663, p. 19. The essay was reprinted in 1665, and in London in 1693 under the title of *The Religious Stoic*.
[3] *Id.* p. 18. [4] *Id.* p. 124. [5] *Id.* p. 76. [6] *Id.* p. 69.

he makes the inept answer that if secondary causes were in operation they acted by God's will; going on later to suggest on his own part that prophecy may be not a miraculous gift, but "a natural (though the highest) perfection of our human nature."[1] Apart from his weak dialectic, he writes in general with cleverness and literary finish, but without any note of sincerity; and his profession of concern that reason should be respected in theology[2] is as little acted on in his later life as his protest against persecution.[3] The inference from the whole essay is that in Scotland, as in England, the civil war had brought up a considerable crop of reasoned unbelief; and that Mackenzie, professed defender of the faith as he was at twenty-five, and official persecutor of nonconformists as he afterwards became, met with a good deal of it in his cultured circle. In his later booklet, *Reason: an Essay* (1690), he speaks of the "ridiculous and impudent extravagance of some who.....take pains to persuade themselves and others that there is not a God."[4] He further coarsely asperses all atheists as debauchees,[5] though he avows that "Infidelity is not the cause of false reasoning, because such as are not atheists reason falsely."

When anti-theistic thought could subsist in the ecclesiastical climate of Puritan Scotland, it must have flourished somewhat in England. In 1667 appeared *A Philosophicall Essay towards an eviction of the Being and Attributes of God*, etc., of which the preface proclaims "the bold and horrid pride of Atheists and Epicures" who "have laboured to introduce into the world a general Atheism, or at least a doubtful Skepticisme in matters of Religion." In 1668 was published Meric Casaubon's treatise, *Of Credulity and Incredulity in things Natural, Civil, and Divine*, assailing not only "the Sadducism of these times in denying spirits, witches," etc., but "Epicurus.....and the juggling and false dealing lately used to bring Atheism into Credit"—a thrust at Gassendi. A similar polemic is entombed in a ponderous folio "romance" entitled *Bentivolio and Urania*, by Nathaniel Ingelo, D.D., a fellow first of Emanuel College, and afterwards of Queen's College, Cambridge (1660; 4th ed. amended, 1682). The second part, edifyingly dedicated to the Earl of Lauderdale, one of the worst men of his day, undertakes

[1] *Religio Stoici*, p. 116.

[2] *Id.* p. 122.

[3] This last is interesting as a probable echo of opinions he had heard from some of his older contemporaries: "Opinion kept within its proper bounds is an [=the Scottish "ane"] pure act of the mind; and so it would appear that to punish the body for that which is a guilt of the soul is as unjust as to punish one relation for another" (pref. pp. 10-11). He adds that "the Almighty hath left no warrand upon holy record for persecuting such as dissent from us."

[4] *Reason: an Essay*, ed. 1690, p. 21. Cp. p. 152.

[5] *Id.* p. 82. It is noteworthy that Mackenzie puts in a protest against "implicit Faith and Infallibility, those great tyrants over Reason" (p. 88). But the essay as a whole is ill-planned and unimpressive.

to handle the "Atheists, Epicureans, and Skepticks"; and in the preface the atheists are duly vituperated; while Epicurus is described as a gross sensualist, in terms of the legend, and the skeptics as "resigned to the slavery of vice." In the sixth book the atheists are allowed a momentary hearing in defence of their "horrid absurdities," from which it appears that there were current arguments alike anthropological and metaphysical against theism. The most competent part of the author's own argument, which is unlimited as to space, is that which controverts the thesis of the invention of religious beliefs by "politicians"[1]—a notion first put in currency, as we have seen, by those who insisted on the expediency and value of such inventions; as, Polybius among the ancients, and Machiavelli among the moderns; and further by Christian priests, who described all non-Christian religions as human inventions.

Dr. Ingelo's folio seems to have had many readers; but he avowedly did not look for converts; and defences of the faith on a less formidable scale were multiplied. A "Person of Honour" (Sir Charles Wolseley) produced in 1669 an essay on *The Unreasonableness of Atheism made Manifest*, which, without supplying any valid arguments, gives some explanation of the growth of unbelief in terms of the political and other antecedents;[2] and in 1670 appeared Richard Barthogge's *Divine Goodness Explicated and Vindicated from the Exceptions of the Atheists*. Baxter in 1671[3] complains that "infidels are grown so numerous and so audacious, and look so big and talk so loud"; and still the process continues. In 1672 Sir William Temple writes indignantly of "those who would pass for wits in our age by saying things which, David tells us, the fool said in his heart."[4] In the same year appeared *The Reasonableness of Scripture-Belief*, by Sir Charles Wolseley, and *The Atheist Silenced*, by one J. M.; in 1674, Dr. Thomas Good's *Firmianus et Dubitantius, or Dialogues concerning Atheism, Infidelity, and Popery;* in 1675, the posthumous treatise of Bishop Wilkins (d. 1672), *Of the Principles and Duties of Natural Religion*, with a preface by Tillotson; and a *Brevis Demonstratio*, with the modest sub-title, "The Truth of Christian Religion Demonstrated by Reasons the best that have yet been out in English"; in 1677, Bishop Stillingfleet's *Letter to a Deist;* and in 1678 the massive work of Cudworth on *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*

[1] Work cited, 2nd ed. pt. ii, pp. 106–15.
[2] Cp. *Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 86–87, 89–90. This explanation is also given by Bishop Wilkins in his treatise on *Natural Religion*, 7th ed. p. 354.
[3] Replying to Herbert's *De Veritate*, which he seems not to have read before.
[4] Pref. to *Obs. upon the United Prov. of the Netherlands*, in Works, ed. 1814, i, 36.

attacking atheism (not deism) on philosophic lines which sadly compromised the learned author.[1] English dialectic being found insufficient, there was even produced in 1679 a translation by the Rev. Joshua Bonhome of the French *L'Athéisme Convaincu* of David Dersdon, published twenty years before.

All of these works explicitly avow the abundance of unbelief; Tillotson, himself accused of it, pronounces the age "miserably overrun with Skepticism and Infidelity"; and Wilkins, avowing that these tendencies are common "not only among sensual men of the vulgar sort, but even among those who pretend to a more than ordinary measure of wit and learning," attempts to meet them by a purely deistic argument, with a claim for Christianity appended, as if he were concerned chiefly to rebut atheism, and held his own Christianity on a very rationalistic tenure. The fact was that the orthodox clergy were as hard put to it to repel religious antinomianism on the one hand as to repel atheism on the other; and no small part of the deistic movement seems to have been set up by the reaction against pious lawlessness.[2] Thus we have Tillotson, writing as Dean of Canterbury, driven to plead in his preface to the work of Wilkins that "it is a great mistake" to think the obligation of moral duties "doth solely depend upon the revelation of God's will made to us in the Holy Scriptures." It was such reasoning that brought upon him the charge of freethinking.

If it be now possible to form any accurate picture of the state of belief in the latter part of the seventeenth century, it may perhaps be done by recognizing three categories of temperament or mental proclivity. First we have to reckon with the great mass of people held to religious observance by hebetude,[3] devoid of the deeper mystical impulse or psychic bias which exhibited itself on the one hand among the dissenters who partly preserved the "enthusiasms" of the Commonwealth period, and on the other among the more cultured pietists of the Church who, banning "enthusiasm" in its stronger forms, cultivated a certain "enthusiasm" of their own. Religionists of the latter type were ministered to by superstitious mystics like Henry More, who, even when undertaking to "prove" the existence of God and the separate existence of the soul by argument and by demonology, taught them to cultivate a "warranted enthusiasm," and to "endeavour after a certain principle more noble

[1] Cp. *Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 87, 94–98, 111, 112.
[2] As to the religious immoralism see Mosheim, 17 Cent. sec. ii, pt. ii, ch. ii, § 23, and Murdock's notes.
[3] Compare the picture of average Protestant deportment given by Benjamin Bennet in his *Discourses against Popery*, 1714, p. 377.

and inward than reason itself, and without which reason will falter, or at least reach but to mean and frivolous things"....."something in me while I thus speak, which I must confess is of so retruse a nature that I want a name for it, unless I should adventure to term it divine sagacity, which is the first rise of successful reason, especially in matters of great comprehension and moment."[1] There was small psychic difference between this dubiously draped affirmation of the "inner light" and the more orotund proclamations of it by the dissenters who, for a considerable section of the people, still carried on the tradition of rapturous pietism; and the dissenters were not always at a disadvantage in that faculty for rhetoric which has generally been a main factor in doctrinal religion.[2]

From the popular and the eclectic pietist alike the generality of the Anglican clergy stood aloof; and among them, in turn, a rationalistic and anti-mythical habit of mind in a manner joined men who were divided in their beliefs. The clergymen who wrote lawyer-like treatises against schism were akin in psychosis to those who, in their distaste for the parade of inspiration, veered towards deism. Tillotson was not the only man reputed to have done so: fervid dissenters declared that many of the established clergy paid "more respect to the light of reason than to the light of the Scriptures," and further "left Christ out of their religion, disowned imputed righteousness, derided the operations of the holy spirit as the empty pretences of enthusiasts."[3] Of men of this temperament, some would open dialectic batteries against dissent; while others, of a more searching proclivity, would tend to construct for themselves a rationalistic creed out of the current medley of theological and philosophic doctrine. The great mass of course maintained an allegiance of habit to the main formulas of the faith, putting quasi-rational aspects on the trinity, providence, redemption, and the future life, very much as the adherents of political parties normally vindicate their supposed principles; and there was a good deal of surviving temperamental piety even in the Restoration period.[4] But the outstanding feature of the age, as contrasted with

[1] More, *Coll. of Philos. Writings*, 4th ed. 1712, gen. pref. p. 7.

[2] Compare some of the extracts in Thomas Bennet's *Defence of the Discourse of Schism*, etc., 2nd ed. 1704, from the sermons of R. Gouge (1688). The description of men as "mortal crumbling bits of dependency, yesterday's start-ups, that come out of the abyss of nothing, hastening to the bosom of their mother earth" (work cited, p. 93) is a reminder that the resonant and cadenced rhetoric of the Brownes and Taylors and Cudworths was an art of the age, at the command of different orders of propaganda.

[3] Cited by Bennet, *A Defence of the Discourse of Schism*, etc., as cited, p. 41.

[4] Thus Henry More's biographer, the Rev. Richard Ward, says "the late Mr. Chiswel told a friend of mine that for twenty years together after the return of King Charles the Second the *Mystery of Godliness*, and Dr. More's other works, ruled all the booksellers in London" (*Life of More*, 1710, pp. 162-63). We have seen the nature of some of More's "other works."

previous periods, was the increasing commonness of the skeptical or rationalistic attitude in general society. Sir Charles Wolseley protests[1] that "Irreligion, 'tis true, in its practice hath still been the companion of every age, but its open and public defence seems the peculiar of this"; adding that "most of the bad principles of this age are of no earlier a date than one very ill book, and indeed but the spawn of the *Leviathan*." This, as we have seen, is a delusion; but the influence of Hobbes was a potent factor.

All the while, the censorship of the press, which was one of the means by which the clerical party under Charles combated heresy, prevented any new and outspoken writing on the deistic side. The *Treatise of Humane* [*i.e.* Human] *Reason* (1674)[2] of Martin Clifford, a scholarly man-about-town,[3] who was made Master of the Charterhouse, went indeed to the bottom of the question of authority by showing, as Spinoza had done shortly before,[4] that the acceptance of authority is itself in the last resort grounded in reason. The author makes no overt attack on religion, and professes Christian belief, but points out that many modern wars had been on subjects of religion, and elaborates a skilful argument on the gain to be derived from toleration. Reason alone, fairly used, will bring a man to the Christian faith: he who denies this cannot be a Christian. As for schism, it is created not by variation in belief, but by the refusal to tolerate it. This ingenious and well-written treatise speedily elicited three replies, all pronouncing it a pernicious work. Dr. Laney, Bishop of Ely, is reported to have declared that book and author might fitly be burned together;[5] and Dr. Isaac Watts, while praising it for "many useful notions," found it "exalt reason as the rule of religion as well as the guide, to a degree very dangerous."[6] Its actual effect seems to have been to restrain the persecution of dissenters.[7] In 1680, three years after Clifford's death, there appeared *An Apology for a Treatise of Humane Reason*, by Albertus Warren, wherein one of the attacks, entitled *Plain Dealing*, by a Cambridge scholar, is specially answered.[8] This helped to evoke

[1] *The Reasonableness of Scripture Belief*, 1672, Epist. Ded.
[2] Rep. 1675; 2nd ed. 1691; rep. in the *Phœnix*, vol. ii, 1708; 3rd ed. 1736.
[3] A very hostile account of him is given in *Dict. of Nat. Biog.* He was, however, the friend of Cowley, and the "M. Clifford" to whom Sprat addressed his sketch of Cowley's *Life*. He was also a foe of Dryden—the "malicious Matt Clifford" of Dryden's *Sessions of the Poets*; and he attacked the poet in *Notes on Dryden's Poems* (published 1687), and is supposed to have had a hand in the *Rehearsal*. He was befriended by Shaftesbury.
[4] *Tract. Theol. Polit.* c. 15.
[5] Wood, *Athenæ Oxonienses*, ii, 381–82; Granger, *Biog. Hist. of England*, 5th ed. v, 293.
[6] Johnson's *Life of Dr. Watts*, 1785, App. i.
[7] Toulmin, *Hist. of the Prot. Dissenters*, 1814, citing Johnson's *Life of Dr. Watts*.
[8] It has been suggested that this was really written by Clifford, for posthumous publication. The humorous sketch of "His Character" at the close, suggesting that his vices seem to the writer to have outweighed his virtues, hints of ironical mystification.

the anonymous *Discourse of Things above Reason* (1681), by Robert Boyle, the distinguished author of *The Sceptical Chemist*, whom we have seen backing up Henry More in acceptance of the grossest of ignorant superstitions. The most notable thing about the *Discourse* is that it anticipates Berkeley's argument against freethinking mathematicians.[1]

The stress of new discussion is further to be gathered from the work of Howe, *On the Reconcilableness of God's Prescience of the Sins of Men with the Wisdom and Sincerity of his Counsels and Exhortations*, produced in 1677 at Boyle's request. As a modern admirer admits that the thesis was a hopeless one,[2] it is not to be supposed that it did much to lessen doubt in its own day. The preface to Stillingfleet's *Letter to a Deist* (1677), which for the first time brings that appellation into prominence in English controversy, tacitly abandoning the usual ascription of atheism to all unbelievers, avows that "a mean esteem of the Scriptures and the Christian Religion" has become very common "among the Skepticks of this Age," and complains very much, as Butler did sixty years later, of the spirit of "Raillery and Buffoonery" in which the matter was too commonly approached. The "Letter" shows that a multitude of the inconsistencies and other blemishes of the Old Testament were being keenly discussed; and it cannot be said that the Bishop's vindication was well calculated to check the tendency. Indeed, we have the angry and reiterated declaration of Archdeacon Parker, writing in 1681, that "the ignorant and the unlearned among ourselves are become the greatest pretenders to skepticism; and it is the common people that nowadays set up for Skepticism and Infidelity"; that "Atheism and Irreligion are at length become as common as Vice and Debauchery"; and that "Plebeans and Mechanicks have philosophized themselves into Principles of Impiety, and read their Lectures of Atheism in the Streets and Highways. And they are able to demonstrate out of the *Leviathan* that there is no God nor Providence," and so on.[3] As the Archdeacon's method of refutation consists mainly in abuse, he doubtless had the usual measure of success. A similar order of dialectic is employed by Dr. Sherlock in his *Practical Discourse of Religious Assemblies* (1681). The opening section is addressed to the "speculative atheists," here described as receding from the principles of

[1] Work cited, pp. 10, 14, 30, 55. [2] Dr. Urwick, *Life of Howe*, as cited, p. xxxii.

[3] *A Demonstration of the Divine Authority of the Law of Nature and of the Christian Religion*, by Samuel Parker, D.D., 1681, pref. The first part of this treatise is avowedly a popularization of the argument of Cumberland's *Disquisitio de Legibus Naturæ*, 1672. Parker had previously published in Latin a *Disputatio de Deo et Providentia Divina*, in which he raised the question, *An Philosophorum ulli, et quinam Athei fuerunt* (1678).

their "great Master, Mr. Hobbs," who, "though he had no great opinion of religion in itself, yet thought it something considerable when it became the law of the nation." Such atheists, the reverend writer notes, when it is urged on them that all mankind worship "some God or other," reply that such an argument is as good for polytheism and idolatry as for monotheism; so, after formally inviting them to "cure their souls of that fatal and mortal disease, which makes them beasts here and devils hereafter," and lamenting that he is not dealing with "reasonable men," he bethinks him that "the laws of conversation require us to treat all men with just respects," and admits that there have been "some few wise and cautious atheists." To such, accordingly, he suggests that the atheist has already a great advantage in a world morally restrained by religion, where he is under no such restraint, and that, "if he should by his wit and learning proselyte a whole nation to atheism, Hell would break loose on Earth, and he might soon find himself exposed to all those violences and injuries which he now securely practises." For the rest, they had better not affront God, who may after all exist, and be able to revenge himself.[1] And so forth.

Of deists as such, Sherlock has nothing to say beyond treating as "practical atheists" men who admit the existence of God, yet never go to church, though "religious worship is nothing else but a public acknowledgment of God." Their non-attendance "is as great, if not a greater affront to God, and contempt of him, than atheism itself."[2] But the reverend writer's strongest resentment is aroused by the spectacle of freethinkers asking for liberty of thought.

"It is a fulsome and nauseous thing," he breathlessly protests, "to see the atheists and infidels of our days to turn great reformers of religion, to set up a mighty cry for liberty of conscience. For whatever reformation of religion may be needful at this time, whatever liberty of conscience may be fit to be granted, yet what have these men to do to meddle with it; those who think religion a mere fable, and God to be an Utopian prince, and conscience a man of clouts set up for a scarecrow to fright such silly creatures from their beloved enjoyments, and hell and heaven to be forged in the same mint with the poet's Styx and Acheron and Elysian Fields? We are like to see blessed times, if such men had but the reforming of religion."[3]

Dr Sherlock was not going to do good if the devil bade him.

The faith had a wittier champion in South; but he, in a Westminster Abbey sermon of 1684–5,[4] mournfully declares that

"The weakness of our church discipline since its restoration,

[1] Work cited, 2nd ed. 1682, pp. 32, 38–40, 45–48. [2] *Id.* pp. 54–55.
[3] *Id.* p. 52. [4] *Twelve Sermons Preached upon Several Occasions*, 1692, pp. 438–39.

whereby it has been scarce able to get any hold on men's consciences, and much less able to keep it; and the great prevalence of that atheistical doctrine of the *Leviathan;* and the unhappy propagation of Erastianism; these things (I say) with some others have been the sad and fatal causes that have loosed the bands of conscience and eaten out the very heart and sense of Christianity among us, to that degree, that there is now scarce any religious tye or restraint upon persons, but merely from those faint remainders of natural conscience, which God will be sure to keep alive upon the hearts of men, as long as they are men, for the great ends of his own providence, whether they will or no. So that, were it not for this sole obstacle, religion is not now so much in danger of being divided and torn piecemeal by sects and factions, as of being at once devoured by atheism. Which being so, let none wonder that irreligion is accounted policy when it is grown even to a fashion; and passes for wit, with some, as well as for wisdom with others."

How general was the ferment of discussion may be gathered from Dryden's *Religio Laici* (1682), addressed to the youthful Henry Dickinson, translator of Père Richard Simon's *Critical History of the Old Testament* (Fr. 1678). The French scholar was suspect to begin with; and Bishop Burnet tells that Richard Hampden (grandson of the patriot), who was connected with the Rye House Plot and committed suicide in the reign of William and Mary, had been "much corrupted" in his religious principles by Simon's conversation at Paris. In the poem, Dryden recognizes the upsetting tendency of the treatise, albeit he terms it "matchless":—

> For some, who have his secret meaning guessed,
> Have found our author not too much a priest;

and his flowing disquisition, which starts from poetic contempt of reason and ends in prosaic advice to keep quiet about its findings, leaves the matter at that. The hopelessly confused but musical passage:

> Dim as the borrowed beams of moon and stars,
> To lonely, weary, wandering travellers,
> Is Reason to the soul,

begins the poem; but the poet thinks it necessary both in his preface and in his piece to argue with the deists in a fashion which must have entertained them as much as it embarrassed the more thoughtful orthodox, his simple thesis being that all ideas of deity were *débris* from the primeval revelation to Noah, and that natural reason could never have attained to a God-idea at all. And even at that, as regards the Herbertian argument:

> No supernatural worship can be true,
> Because a general law is that alone
> Which must to all and everywhere be known:

he confesses that

> Of all objections this indeed is chief
> To startle reason, stagger frail belief;

and feebly proceeds to argue away the worst meaning of the creed of "the good old man" Athanasius. Finally, we have a fatherly appeal for peace and quietness among the sects:—

> And after hearing what our Church can say,
> If still our reason runs another way,
> That private reason 'tis more just to curb
> Than by disputes the public peace disturb;
> For points obscure are of small use to learn,
> But common quiet is mankind's concern.

It must have been the general disbelief in Dryden's sincerity on religious matters that caused the ascription to him of various free-thinking treatises, for there is no decisive evidence that he was ever pronouncedly heterodox. His attitude to rationalism in the *Religio Laici* is indeed that of one who either could not see the scope of the problem or was determined not to indicate his recognition of it; and on the latter view the insincerity of both poem and preface would be exorbitant. By his nominal hostility to deism, however, Dryden did freethought a service of some importance. After his antagonism had been proclaimed, no one could plausibly associate freethinking with licentiousness, in which Dryden so far exceeded nearly every poet and dramatist of his age that the non-juror Jeremy Collier was free to single him out as the representative of theatrical lubricity. But in simple justice it must also be avowed that of all the opponents of deism in that day he is one of the least embittered, and that his amiable superficiality of argument must have tended to stimulate the claims of reason.

> The late Dr. Verrall, a keen but unprejudiced critic, sums up as regards Dryden's religious poetry in general that "What is clear is that he had a marked dislike of clergy of all sorts, as such"; that "the main points of Deism are noted in *Religio Laici* (46–61); and that "his creed was presumably some sort of Deism" (*Lectures on Dryden*, 1914, pp. 148–50). Further, "*The State of Innocence* is really deistic and not Christian in tone: in his play of *Tyrannic Love*, the religion of St. Catharine may be mere philosophy"; and though the poet in his preface to that play protests that his "outward conversation shall never be justly taxed with the note of atheism or profaneness," the disclaimer "proves nothing as to his positive belief: Deism is not profane." In *Absalom and Achitophel*, again, the "coarse satire on Transubstantiation (118 *ff.*) shows rather religious insensibility than hostile theology," though "the poem shows his

dislike of liberty and private judgment (49–50)." Of the *Religio Laici* the critic asks: "Now in all this, is there any religion at all?" The poem "might well be dismissed as mere politics but for its astounding commencement" (p. 155). The critic unexpectedly fails to note that the admired commencement is an insoluble confusion of metaphors.

How far the process of reasoning had gone among quiet thinking people before the Revolution may be gathered from the essay entitled *Miracles no Violations of the Laws of Nature*, published in 1683.[1] Its thesis is that put explicitly by Montaigne and implicitly by Bacon, that Ignorance is the only worker of miracles; in other words, "that the power of God and the power of Nature are one and the same"—a simple and straightforward way of putting a conception which Cudworth had put circuitously and less courageously a few years before. No Scriptural miracle is challenged *qua* event. "Among the many miracles related to be done in favour of the Israelites," says the writer, "there is (I think) no one that can be apodictically demonstrated to be repugnant to th' establisht Order of Nature";[2] and he calmly accepts the Biblical account of the first rainbow, explaining it as passing for a miracle merely because it was the first. He takes his motto from Pliny: "Quid non miraculo est, cum primum in notitiam venit?"[3] This is, however, a preliminary strategy; as is the opening reminder that "most of the ancient Fathers.....and of the most learned Theologues among the moderns" hold that the Scriptures as regards natural things do not design to instruct men in physics but "aim only to excite pious affections in their breasts."

We accordingly reach the position that the Scripture "many times speaks of natural things, yea even of God himself, very improperly, as aiming to affect and occupy the imagination of men, not to convince their reason." Many Scriptural narratives, therefore, "are either delivered poetically or related according to the preconceived opinions and prejudices of the writer." "Wherefore we here absolutely conclude that all the events that are *truly* related in the Scripture to have come to pass, proceeded necessarily .....according to the immutable Laws of Nature; and that if anything be found which can be apodictically demonstrated to be repugnant to those laws.....we may safely and piously believe the same not to have been dictated by divine inspiration, but impiously added to the sacred volume by sacrilegious men; for whatever is

[1] This has been ascribed, without any good ground, to Charles Blount. It does not seem to me to be in his style.
[2] Premonition to the Candid Reader.
[3] *Hist. Nat.* vii, 1.

against Nature is against Reason; and whatever is against Reason is absurd, and therefore also to be rejected and refuted."[1]

Lest this should be found too hard a doctrine there is added, àpropos of Joshua's staying of the sun and moon, a literary solution which has often done duty in later times. "To interpret Scripture-miracles, and to understand from the narrations of them how they really happened, 'tis necessary to know the opinions of those who first reported them.....otherwise we shall confound.....things which have really happen'd with things purely imaginary, and which were only prophetic representations. For in Scripture many things are related as real, and which were also believ'd to be real even by the relators themselves, that notwithstanding were only representations form'd in the brain, and merely imaginary—as that God, the Supreme Being, descended from heaven.....upon Mount Sinai.....; that Elias ascended to heaven in a fiery chariot.....which were only representations accommodated to their opinions who deliver'd them down to us."[2] Such argumentation had to prepare the way for Hume's Essay *Of Miracles*, half a century later; and concerning both reasoners it is to be remembered that their thought was to be "infidelity" for centuries after them. It needed real freethinking, then, to produce such doctrine in the days of the Rye House Plot.

Meanwhile, during an accidental lapse of the press laws, the deist CHARLES BLOUNT[3] (1654–1693) had produced with his father's help his *Anima Mundi* (1679), in which there is set forth a measure of cautious unbelief; following it up (1680) by his much more pronounced essay, *Great is Diana of the Ephesians*, a keen attack on the principle of revelation and clericalism in general, and his translation [from the Latin version] of Philostratus's *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, so annotated[4] as to be an ingenious counter-blast to the Christian claims, and so prefaced as to be an open challenge to orthodoxy. The book was condemned to be burnt; and only the influence of Blount's family,[5] probably, prevented his

[1] Pamphlet cited, pp. 20, 21. [2] *Id.* p. 23.

[3] Concerning whom see Macaulay's *History*, ch. xix, ed. 1877, ii. 411–12—a very prejudiced account. Blount is there spoken of as "one of the most unscrupulous plagiaries that ever lived," and as having "stolen" from Milton, because he issued a pamphlet "By Philopatris," largely made up from the *Areopagitica*. Compare Macaulay's treatment of Locke, who adopted Dudley North's currency scheme (ch. xxi, vol. ii, p. 547).

[4] Bayle (art. APOLLONIUS, note), who is followed by the French translator of Philostratus with Blount's notes in 1779 (J. F. Salvemini de Castillon), says the notes were drawn from the papers of Lord Herbert of Cherbury; but of this Blount says nothing.

[5] As to these see the *Dict. of Nat. Biog.* The statements of Anthony Wood as to the writings of Blount's father, relied on in the author's *Dynamics of Religion*, appear to be erroneous. Sir Thomas Pope Blount, Charles's eldest brother, shows a skeptical turn of mind in his *Essays* (3rd ed. 1697, *Essay 7*). Himself a learned man, he disparages learning as checking thought; and, professing belief in the longevity of the patriarchs (p. 187), pronounces popery and pagan religion to be mere works of priestcraft (*Essay 1*). He detested theological controversy and intolerance, and seems to have been a Lockian.

being prosecuted. The propaganda, however, was resumed by Blount and his friends in small tracts, and after his suicide[1] in 1693 these were collected as the *Oracles of Reason* (1693), his collected works (without the *Apollonius*) appearing in 1695. By this time the political tension of the Revolution of 1688 was over; Le Clerc's work on the inspiration of the Old Testament, raising many doubts as to the authorship of the Pentateuch, had been translated in 1690; Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (1670) had been translated into English in 1689, and had impressed in a similar sense a number of scholars; his *Ethica* had given a new direction to the theistic controversy; the Boyle Lecture had been established for the confutation of unbelievers; and after the political convulsion of 1688 has subsided it rains refutations. Atheism is now so fiercely attacked, and with such specific arguments—as in Bentley's Boyle Lectures (1692), Edwards's *Thoughts concerning the Causes of Atheism* (1695), and many other treatises—that there can be no question as to the private vogue of atheistic or agnostic opinions. If we are to judge solely from the apologetic literature, it was more common than deism. Yet it seems impossible to doubt that there were ten deists for one atheist. Bentley's admission that he never met an explicit atheist[2] suggests that much of the atheism warred against was tentative. It was only the deists who could venture on open avowals; and the replies to them were most discussed.

Much account was made of one of the most compendious, the *Short and Easy Method with the Deists* (1697), by the nonjuror Charles Leslie; but this handy argument (which is really adopted without acknowledgment from an apologetic treatise by a French Protestant refugee, published in 1688[3]) was not only much bantered by deists, but was sharply censured as incompetent by the French Protestant Le Clerc;[4] and many other disputants had to come to the rescue. A partial list will suffice to show the rate of increase of the ferment:—

1683. Dr. Rust, *Discourse on the Use of Reason in.....Religion, against Enthusiasts and Deists.*

1685. Duke of Buckingham, *A Short Discourse upon the Reasonableness of men's having a religion or worship of God.*

„ *The Atheist Unmask'd.* By a Person of Honour.

[1] All that is known of this tragedy is that Blount loved his deceased wife's sister and wished to marry her; but she held it unlawful, and he was in despair. According to Pope, a sufficiently untrustworthy authority, he "gave himself a stab in the arm, as pretending to kill himself, of the consequence of which he really died" (note to *Epilogue to the Satires*, i, 123). An overstrung nervous system may be diagnosed from his writing.

[2] *Boyle Lectures on Atheism*, ed. 1724, p. 4.

[3] *Reflexions upon the Books of the Holy Scriptures to establish the Truth of the Christian Religion*, by Peter Allix, D.D., 1688, i, 6–7.

[4] As cited by Leslie, *Truth of Christianity Demonstrated*, 1711, pp. 17–21.

1688. Peter Allix, D.D. *Reflexions*, etc., as above cited.
1691. Archbishop Tenison, *The Folly of Atheism.*
„ *Discourse of Natural and Revealed Religion.*
„ John Ray, *Wisdom of God manifested in the Works of the Creation.* (Many reprints.)
1692. C. Ellis, *The Folly of Atheism Demonstrated.*
„ Bentley's *Sermons on Atheism.* (First Boyle Lectures.)
1693. Archbishop Davies, *An Anatomy of Atheism.* A poem.
„ *A Conference between an Atheist and his Friend.*
1694. J. Goodman, *A Winter Evening Conference between Neighbours.*
„ Bishop Kidder, *A Demonstration of the Messias.* (Boyle Lect.)
1695. John Locke, *The Reasonableness of Christianity.*
„ John Edwards, B.D., *Some Thoughts concerning the Several Causes and occasions of Atheism.* (Directed against Locke.)
1696. *An Account of the Growth of Deism in England.*
„ *Reflections on a Pamphlet, etc.* (the last named).
„ Sir C. Wolseley, *The Unreasonableness of Atheism Demonstrated.* (Rep.)
„ Dr. Nichols' *Conference with a Theist.* Pt. I. (Answer to Blount.)
„ J. Edwards, D.D., *A Demonstration of the Evidence and Providence of God.*
„ E. Pelling, *Discourse.....on the Existence of God* (Pt. II in 1705).
1697. Stephen Eye, *A Discourse concerning Natural and Revealed Religion.*
„ Bishop Gastrell, *The Certainty and Necessity of Religion.* (Boyle Lect.)
„ H. Prideaux, *Discourse vindicating Christianity*, etc.
„ C. Leslie, *A Short and Easy Method with the Deists.*
1698. Dr. J. Harris, *A Refutation of Atheistical Objections.* (Boyle Lect.)
„ Thos. Emes, *The Atheist turned Deist, and the Deist turned Christian.*
1699. C. Lidgould, *Proclamation against Atheism*, etc.
„ J. Bradley, *An Impartial View of the Truth of Christianity.* (Answer to Blount.)
1700. Bishop Bradford, *The Credibility of the Christian Revelation.* (Boyle Lect.)
„ Rev. P. Berault, *Discourses on the Trinity, Atheism*, etc.
1701. T. Knaggs, *Against Atheism.*
„ W. Scot, *Discourses concerning the wisdom and goodness of God.*
1702. *A Confutation of Atheism.*
„ Dr. Stanhope, *The Truth and Excellency of the Christian Religion.* (Boyle Lect.)
1704. *An Antidote of Atheism* (? Reprint of More).
1705. Translation of Herbert's *Ancient Religion of the Gentiles.*
„ Charles Gildon, *The Deist's Manual* (a recantation).
„ Ed. Pelling, *Discourse concerning the existence of God.* Part II.
„ Dr. Samuel Clarke, *A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God*, etc. (Boyle Lect. of 1704.)
1706. *A Preservative against Atheism and Infidelity.*
„ Th. Wise, B.D., *A Confutation of the Reason and Philosophy of Atheism* (recast and abridgment of Cudworth).
„ T. Oldfield, *Mille Testes; against the Atheists, Deists, and Skepticks.*
„ *The Case of Deism fully and fairly stated, with Dialogue*, etc.
1707. Dr. J. Hancock, *Arguments to prove the Being of a God.* (Boyle Lect.)

Still there was no new deistic literature apart from Toland's

Christianity not Mysterious (1696) and his unauthorized issue (of course without author's name) of Shaftesbury's *Inquiry Concerning Virtue* in 1699; and in that there is little direct conflict with orthodoxy, though it plainly enough implied that scripturalism would injuriously affect morals. It seems at that date, perhaps through the author's objection to its circulation, to have attracted little attention; but he tells that it incurred hostility.[1] Blount's famous stratagem of 1693[2] had led to the dropping of the official censorship of the press, the Licensing Act having been renewed for only two years in 1693 and dropped in 1695; but after the prompt issue of Blount's collected works in that year, and the appearance of Toland's *Christianity not Mysterious* in the next, the new and comprehensive Blasphemy Law of 1697[3] served sufficiently to terrorize writers and printers in that regard for the time being.[4] Bare denial of the Trinity, of the truth of the Christian religion, or of the divine authority of the Scriptures, was made punishable by disability for any civil office; and on a second offence by three years' imprisonment, with withdrawal of all legal rights. The first clear gain from the freedom of the press was thus simply a cheapening of books in general. By the Licensing Act of Charles II, and by a separate patent, the Stationers' Company had a monopoly of printing and selling all classical authors; and while their editions were disgracefully bad, the importers of the excellent editions printed in Holland had to pay them a penalty of 6s. 8d. on each copy.[5] By the same Act, passed under clerical influence, the number even of master printers and letter-founders had been reduced, and the number of presses and apprentices strictly limited; and the total effect of the monopolies was that when Dutch-printed books were imported in exchange for English, the latter sold more cheaply at Amsterdam than they did in London, the English consumer, of course, bearing the burden.[6] The immediate effect, therefore, of the lapse of the Licensing Act must have been to cheapen greatly all

[1] *Characteristics*, ii, 263 (*Moralists*, pt, ii, § 3). One of the most dangerous positions from the orthodox point of view would be the thesis that while religion could do either great good or great harm to morals, atheism could do neither. (Bk. I, pt. iii, § 1.) Cp. Bacon's Essay, *Of Atheism*.

[2] Blount, after assailing in anonymous pamphlets Bohun the licenser, induced him to license a work entitled *King William and Queen Mary Conquerors*, which infuriated the nation. Macaulay calls the device "a base and wicked scheme." It was almost innocent in comparison with Blount's promotion of the "Popish plot" mania. See *Who Killed Sir Edmund Godfrey Berry?* by Alfred Marks, 1905, pp. 133–35, 150.

[3] See the text in Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner's *Penalties upon Opinion*, pp. 19–21. Macaulay does not mention this measure.

[4] The Act had been preceded by a proclamation of the king, dated Feb. 24, 1697.

[5] As to an earlier monopoly of the London booksellers, see George Herbert's letters to the Archbishop of Canterbury and to Bacon, Jan. 29, 1620. In *Works of George Herbert*, ed. 1841, i. 217–18.

[6] See Locke's notes on the Licensing Act in Lord King's *Life of Locke*, 1829, pp. 203–206; Fox Bourne's *Life of Locke*, ii, 313–14; Macaulay's *History*, ii, 504.

foreign books by removal of duties, and at the same time to cheapen English books by leaving printing free. It will be seen above that the output of treatises *against* freethought at once increases in 1696. But the revolution of 1688, like the Great Rebellion, had doubtless given a new stimulus to freethinking; and the total effect of freer trade in books, even with a veto on "blasphemy," could only be to further it. This was ere long to be made plain.

§ 3

Alongside of the more popular and native influences, there were at work others, foreign and more academic; and even in professedly orthodox writers there are signs of the influence of deistic thought. Thus Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici* (written about 1634, published 1642) has been repeatedly characterized[1] as tending to promote deism by its tone and method; and there can be no question that it assumes a great prevalence of critical unbelief, to which its attitude is an odd combination of humorous cynicism and tranquil dogmatism, often recalling Montaigne,[2] and at times anticipating Emerson. There is little savour of confident belief in the smiling maxim that "to confirm and establish our belief 'tis best to argue with judgments below our own"; or in the avowal, "In divinity I love to keep the road; and though not in an implicit yet an humble faith, follow the great wheel of the Church, by which I move."[3] The pose of the typical believer: "I can answer all the objections of Satan and my rebellious reason with that odd resolution I learned of Tertullian, *Certum est quia impossibile est*,"[4] tells in his case of no anxious hours; and such smiling incuriousness is not conducive to conviction in others, especially when followed by a recital of some of the many insoluble dilemmas of Scripture. When he reasons he is merely self-subversive, as in the saying, "'Tis not a ridiculous devotion to say a prayer before a game at tables; *for* even in sortileges and matters of greatest uncertainty there is a settled and *pre-ordered* course of effects";[5] and after remarking that the notions of Fortune and astral influence "have perverted the devotion of many into atheism," he proceeds to avow that his

[1] Trinius, *Freydenker-Lexicon*, 1759, p. 120; Pünjer, i, 291, 300–301. Browne was even called an atheist. Arpe, *Apologia pro Vanino*, 1712, p. 27, citing Welschius. Mr. A. H. Bullen, in his introduction to his ed. of Marlowe (1885, vol. i, p. lviii), remarks that Browne, who "kept the road" in divinity, "exposed the vulnerable points in the Scriptural narratives with more acumen and gusto than the whole army of freethinkers, from Anthony Collins downwards." This is of course an extravagance, but, as Mr. Bullen remarks in the *Dict. of Nat. Biog.* vii, 66, Browne discusses "with evident relish" the "seeming absurdities in the Scriptural narrative."

[2] Browne's Annotator points to the derivation of his skepticism from "that excellent French writer Monsieur Mountaign, in whom I often trace him" (Sayle's ed. 1904, i, p. xviii).

[3] *Religio Medici*, i, 6. [4] *Id.* i, 9. [5] *Id.* i, 18.

many doubts never inclined him "to any point of infidelity or desperate positions of atheism; for I have been these many years of opinion there never was any."[1] Yet in his later treatise on *Vulgar Errors* (1645) he devotes a chapter[2] to the activities of Satan in instilling the belief that "there is no God at all.....that the necessity of his entity dependeth upon ours.....; that the natural truth of God is an artificial erection of Man, and the Creator himself but a subtile invention of the Creature." He further notes as coming from the same source "a secondary and deductive Atheism—that although men concede there is a God, yet should they deny his providence. And therefore assertions have flown about, that he intendeth only the care of the species or common natures, but letteth loose the guard of individuals, and single existences therein."[3] Browne now asserts merely that "many there are who cannot conceive that there was ever any absolute Atheist," and does not clearly affirm that Satan labours wholly in vain. The broad fact remains that he avows "reason is a rebel unto faith"; and in the *Vulgar Errors* he shows in his own reasoning much of the practical play of the new skepticism.[4] Yet it is finally on record that in 1664, on the trial of two women for witchcraft, Browne declared that the fits suffered from by the children said to have been bewitched "were natural, but heightened by the devil's co-operating with the malice of the witches, at whose instance he did the villainies."[5] This amazing deliverance is believed to have "turned the scale" in the minds of the jury against the poor women, and they were sentenced by the sitting judge, Sir Matthew Hale, to be hanged. It would seem that in Browne's latter years the irrational element in him, never long dormant, overpowered the rational. The judgment is a sad one to have to pass on one of the greatest masters of prose in any language. In other men, happily, the progression was different.

The opening even of Jeremy Taylor's *Ductor Dubitantium*, so far as it goes, falls little short of the deistic position.[6] A new vein of rationalism, too, is opened in the theological field by the great

[1] *Religio Medici*, i, 20.

[2] Bk. I, ch. x.

[3] Here we have a theorem independently reached later (with the substitution of Nature for God) by Mary Wollstonecraft and Tennyson in turn. Browne cites yet another: "that he looks not below the moon, but hath resigned the regiment of sublunary affairs unto inferior deputations"—a thesis adopted in effect by Cudworth.

[4] By an error of the press, Browne is made in Mr. Sayle's excellent reprint (i, 108) to begin a sentence in the middle of a clause, with an odd result:—"I do confess I am an Atheist. I cannot persuade myself to honour that the world adores." The passage should obviously read: "to that subterraneous Idol [avarice] and God of the Earth I do confess I am an Atheist," etc.

[5] Hutchinson, *Histor. Essay Conc. Witchcraft*, 1718, p. 118; 2nd ed. 1720, p. 151.

[6] Cp. Whewell, *Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy*, ed. 1862, p. 33.

Cambridge scholar John Spencer, whose *Discourse concerning Prodigies* (1663; 2nd ed. 1665), though quite orthodox in its main positions, has in part the effect of a plea for naturalism as against supernaturalism. Spencer's great work, *De legibus Hebræorum* (1685), is, apart from Spinoza, the most scientific view of Hebrew institutions produced before the rise of German theological rationalism in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Holding most of the Jewish rites to have been planned by the deity as substitutes for or safeguards against those of the Gentiles which they resembled, he unconsciously laid, with Herbert, the foundations of comparative hierology, bringing to the work a learning which is still serviceable to scholars.[1] And there were yet other new departures by clerical writers, who of course exhibit the difficulty of attaining a consistent rationalism.

One clergyman, Joseph Glanvill, is found publishing a treatise on *The Vanity of Dogmatizing* (1661; amended in 1665 under the title *Scepsis Scientifica*),[2] wherein, with careful reservation of religion, the spirit of critical science is applied to the ordinary processes of opinion with much energy, and the "mechanical philosophy" of Descartes is embraced with zeal. Following Raleigh and Hobbes,[3] Glanvill also puts the positive view of causation[4] afterwards fully developed by Hume.[5] Yet he not only vetoed all innovation in "divinity," but held stoutly by the crudest forms of the belief in witchcraft, and was with Henry More its chief English champion in his day against rational disbelief.[6] In religion he had so little of the skeptical faculty that he declared "Our religious foundations are fastened at the pillars of the intellectual world, and the grand articles of our belief as demonstrable as geometry. Nor will ever either the subtile attempts of the resolved Atheist, or the passionate hurricanes of the wild enthusiast, any more be able to prevail against the reason our faith is built on, than the blustering winds to blow out the Sun."[7] He had his due reward in being philosophically assailed by the Catholic priest Thomas White as a promoter of skepticism,[8]

[1] Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites*, 1889, pref. p. vi; Rev. Dr. Duff, *Hist. of Old Test. Criticism*, R. P. A. 1910, p. 113.

[2] This appears again, much curtailed and "so altered as to be in a manner new," in its author's collected *Essays on Several Important Subjects in Religion and Philosophy* (1676), under the title *Against Confidence in Philosophy*.

[3] See the *Humane Nature* (1640), ch. iv, §§ 7–9.

[4] *Scepsis Scientifica*, ch. 23, § 1.

[5] See the passages compared by Lewes, *History of Philosophy*, 4th ed. ii, 338.

[6] In his *Blow at Modern Sadducism* (4th ed. 1668), *Sadducismus Triumphatus* (1681; 3rd ed. 1689), and *A Whip to the Droll, Fidler to the Atheist* (1688—a letter to Henry More, who was zealous on the same lines). These works seem to have been much more widely circulated than the *Scepsis Scientifica*.

[7] *Scepsis*, ch. 20, § 3.

[8] See Glanvill's reply in a letter to a friend (1665), re-written as *Essay II, Of Scepticism and Certainty*: in *A short Reply to the learned Mr. Thomas White* in his collected *Essays on Several Important Subjects*, 1676.

and by an Anglican clergyman, wroth with the Royal Society and all its works, as an infidel and an atheist.[1]

This was as true as clerical charges of the kind usually were in the period. But without any animus or violence of interpretation, a reader of Glanvill's visitation sermon on *The Agreement of Reason and Religion*[2] might have inferred that he was a deist. It sets forth that "religion primarily and mainly consists in worship and vertue," and that it "in a secondary sense consists in some principles relating to the worship of God, and of his Son, in the ways of devout and vertuous living"; Christianity having "superadded" baptism and the Lord's Supper to "the religion of mankind." Apart from his obsession as to witchcraft—and perhaps even as to that—Glanvill seems to have grown more and more rationalistic in his later years. The *Scepsis* omits some of the credulous flights of the *Vanity of Dogmatizing*;[3] the re-written version in the collected *Essays* omits such dithyrambs as that above quoted; and the sermon in its revised form sets out with the emphatic declaration: "There is not anything that I know which hath done more mischief to religion than the disparaging of reason under pretence of respect and favour to it; for hereby the very foundations of Christian faith have been undermined, and the world prepared for atheism. And if reason must not be heard, the *Being* of a God and the authority of Scripture can neither be proved nor defended; and so our faith drops to the ground like an house that hath no foundation." Such reasoning could not but be suspect to the orthodoxy of the age.

Apart from the influence of Hobbes, who, like Descartes, shaped his thinking from the starting-point of Galileo, the Cartesian philosophy played in England a great transitional part. At the university of Cambridge it was already naturalized;[4] and the influence of Glanvill, who was an active member of the Royal Society, must have carried it further. The remarkable treatise of the anatomist Glisson,[5] *De natura substantiæ energetica* (1672), suggests the influence of either Descartes or Gassendi; and it is remarkable that the clerical moralist Cumberland, writing his *Disquisitio de legibus Naturæ* (1672) in reply to Hobbes, not only takes up a utilitarian position akin to Hobbes's own, and expressly avoids any appeal to the theological

[1] See the reply in PLUS ULTRA: *or, the Progress and Advancement of Knowledge since the days of Aristotle*, 1668, Epist. Ded. Pref. ch. xviii, and Conclusion. [The re-written treatise, in the collected *Essays*, eliminates the controversial matter.]

[2] First printed with Glanvill's *Philosophia Pia* in 1671. Rep. as an essay in the collected *Essays*.

[3] Owen, pref. to *Scepsis*, pp. xx–xxii.

[4] Owen, pref. to ed. of *Scepsis Scientifica*, p. ix.

[5] Of whom, however, a high medical authority declares that, "as a physiologist, he was sunk in realism" (that is, metaphysical apriorism). Prof. T. Clifford Allbutt, Harveian Oration on *Science and Medieval Thought*, 1901, p. 44.

doctrine of future punishments, but introduces physiology into his ethic to the extent of partially figuring as an ethical materialist.[1] In regard to Gassendi's direct influence it has to be noted that in 1659 there appeared *The Vanity of Judiciary Astrology*, translated by "A Person of Quality," from P. Gassendus; and further that, as is remarked by Reid, Locke borrowed more from Gassendi than from any other writer.[2]

[It is stated by Sir Leslie Stephen (*English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, 2nd ed. i, 32) that in England the philosophy of Descartes made no distinguished disciples; and that John Norris "seems to be the only exception to the general indifference." This overlooks (1) Glanvill, who constantly cites and applauds Descartes (*Scepsis Scientifica*, passim). (2) In Henry More's *Divine Dialogues*, again (1668), one of the disputants is made to speak (*Dial.* i, ch. xxiv) of "that admired wit Descartes"; and he later praises him even when passing censure (above, p. 65). More had been one of the admirers in his youth, and changed his view (cp. Ward's *Life of Dr. Henry More*, pp. 63–64). But his first letter to Descartes begins: "Quanta voluptate perfusus est animus meus, Vir clarissime, scriptis tuis legendis, nemo quisquam præter te unum potest conjectare." (3) There was published in 1670 a translation of Des Fourneillis's letter in defence of the Cartesian system, with François Bayle's *General System of the Cartesian Philosophy*. (4) The continual objections to the atheistic tendency of Descartes throughout Cudworth's *True Intellectual System* imply anything but "general indifference"; and (5) Barrow's tone in venturing to oppose him (cit. in Whewell's *Philosophy of Discovery*, 1860, p. 179) pays tribute to his great influence. (6) Molyneux, in the preface to his translation of the *Six Metaphysical Meditations* of Descartes in 1680, speaks of him as "this excellent philosopher" and "this prodigious man." (7) Maxwell, in a note to his translation (1727) of Bishop Cumberland's *Disquisitio de legibus Naturæ*, remarks that the doctrine of a universal *plenum* was accepted from the Cartesian philosophy by Cumberland, "in whose time that philosophy prevailed much" (p. 120). See again (8) Clarke's Answer to Butler's Fifth Letter (1718) as to the "universal prevalence" of Descartes's notions in natural philosophy. (9) The Scottish Lord President Forbes (d. 1747) summed up that "Descartes's romance kept entire possession of men's belief for fully fifty years" (*Works*, ii, 132). (10) And his fellow-judge, Sir William Anstruther, in his "Discourse against Atheism" (*Essays, Moral and Divine*, 1701, pp. 6, 8, 9), cites with much approval

[1] Cp. Whewell, as last cited, pp. 75–83; Hallam, *Literature of Europe*, iv, 159–71.
[2] Reid, *Intellectual Powers*, Essay I, ch. i; Hamilton's ed. of Works, p. 226. Glanvill calls Gassendi "that noble wit." (*Scepsis Scientifica*, Owen's ed. p. 151.)

the theistic argument of "the celebrated Descartes" as "the last evidences which appeared upon the stage of learning" in that connection.

Cp. Berkeley, *Siris*, § 331. Of Berkeley himself, Professor Adamson writes (*Encyc. Brit.* iii, 589) that "Descartes and Locke.....are his real masters in speculation." The Cartesian view of the eternity and infinity of matter had further become an accepted ground for "philosophical atheists" in England before the end of the century (Molyneux, in *Familiar Letters of Locke and his Friends*, 1708, p. 46). As to the many writers who charged Descartes with promoting atheism, see Mosheim's notes in Harrison's ed. of Cudworth's *Intellectual System*, i, 275–76; Clarke, as above cited; Leibnitz's letter to Philip, cited by Latta, *Leibnitz*, 1898, p. 8, *note;* and Brewster's *Memoirs of Newton*, ii, 315.

Sir Leslie Stephen seems to have followed, under a misapprehension, Whewell, who contends merely that the Cartesian doctrine of vortices was never widely accepted in England (*Philos. of Discovery*, pp. 177–78; cp. *Hist. of the Induct. Sciences*, ed. 1857, ii, 107, 147–48). Buckle was perhaps similarly misled when he wrote in his note-book: "Descartes was never popular in England" (*Misc. Works*, abridged ed. i, 269). Whewell himself mentions that Clarke, soon after taking his degree at Cambridge, "was actively engaged in introducing into the academic course of study, first, the philosophy of Descartes in its best form, and, next, the philosophy of Newton" (*Lectures on Moral Philosophy*, ed. 1862, pp. 97–98). And Professor Fowler, in correcting his first remarks on the point, decides that "many of the mathematical teachers at Cambridge continued to teach the Cartesian system for some time after the publication of Newton's Principia" (ed. of *Nov. Org.*, p. xi).

It is clear, however, that insofar as new science set up a direct conflict with Scriptural assumptions it gained ground but slowly and indirectly. It is difficult to-day to realize with what difficulty the Copernican and Galilean doctrine of the earth's rotation and movement round the sun found acceptance even among studious men. We have seen that Bacon finally rejected it. And as Professor Masson points out,[1] not only does Milton seem uncertain to the last concerning the truth of the Copernican system, but his friends and literary associates, the "Smectymnuans," in their answer to Bishop Hall's *Humble Remonstrance* (1641), had pointed to the Copernican doctrine as an unquestioned instance of a supreme absurdity. Glanvill, remarking in 1665 that "it is generally opinion'd that the Earth rests as the world's centre," avows that "for a man to go

[1] *Poet. Works of Milton*, 1874, Introd. i, 92 *sq.*

about to counter-argue this belief is as fruitless as to whistle against the winds. I shall not undertake to maintain the paradox that confronts this almost Catholic opinion. Its assertion would be entertained with the hoot of the rabble; the very mention of it as possible, is among the most ridiculous."[1] All he ventures to do is to show that the senses do not really vouch the ordinary view. Not till the eighteenth century, probably, did the common run of educated people anywhere accept the scientific teaching.

On the other hand, however, there was growing up not a little Socinian and other Unitarianism, for some variety of which we have seen two men burned in 1612. Church measures had been taken against the importation of Socinian books as early as 1640. The famous Lord Falkland, slain in the Civil War, is supposed to have leant to that opinion;[2] and Chillingworth, whose *Religion of Protestants* (1637) was already a remarkable application of rational tests to ecclesiastical questions in defiance of patristic authority,[3] seems in his old age to have turned Socinian.[4] Violent attacks on the Trinity are noted among the heresies of 1646.[5] Colonel John Fry, one of the regicides, who in Parliament was accused of rejecting the Trinity, cleared himself by explaining that he simply objected to the terms "persons" and "subsistence," but was one of those who sought to help the persecuted Unitarian Biddle. In 1652 the Parliament ordered the destruction of a certain Socinian Catechism; and by 1655 the heresy seems to have become common.[6] It is now certain that Milton was substantially a Unitarian,[7] and that Locke and Newton were at heart no less so.[8]

The temper of the Unitarian school appears perhaps at its best in the anonymous *Rational Catechism* published in 1686. It purports to be "an instructive conference between a father and his son," and is dedicated by the father to his two daughters. The "Catechism" rises above the common run of its species in that it is really a dialogue, in which the *rôles* are at times reversed, and the catechumen is permitted to think and speak for himself. The exposition is entirely unevangelical. Right religion is declared to consist in right conduct; and while the actuality of the Christian record is maintained on argued grounds, on the lines of Grotius and

[1] *Scepsis Scientifica*, Owen's ed. p. 66. In the condensed version of the treatise in Glanvill's collected *Essays* (1676, p. 20), the language is to the same effect.
[2] J. J. Tayler, *Retrospect of the Religious Life of England*, Martineau's ed. p. 204; Wallace, *Antitrinitarian Biography*, iii, 152–53.
[3] Cp. Buckle, 3-vol. ed. ii. 347–51; 1-vol. ed. pp. 196–99.
[4] Tayler, *Retrospect*, pp. 204–205; Wallace, iii, 154–56. [5] *Gangræna*, pt. i, p. 38.
[6] Tayler, p. 221. As to Biddle, the chief propagandist of the sect, see pp. 221–24, and Wallace, Art. 285.
[7] Macaulay, *Essay on Milton*. Cp. Brown's ed. (Clarendon Press) of the poems of Milton, ii, 30. [8] Cp. *Dynamics of Religion*, ch. v.

Parker, the doctrine of salvation by faith is strictly excluded, future happiness being posited as the reward of good life, not of faith. There is no negation, the author's object being avowedly peace and conciliation; but the Epistle Dedicatory declares that religious reasoners have hitherto "failed in their foundation-work. They have too much slighted that philosophy which is the natural religion of all men; and which, being natural, must needs be universal and eternal: and upon which therefore, or at least in conformity with which, all instituted and revealed religion must be supposed to be built." We have here in effect the position taken up by Toland ten years later; and, in germ, the principle which developed deism, albeit in connection with an affirmation of the truth of the Christian records. Of the central Christian doctrine there is no acceptance, though there is laudation of Jesus; and reprints after 1695 bore the motto, from Locke:[1] "As the foundation of virtue, there ought very earnestly to be imprinted on the mind of a young man a true notion of God, as of the independent supreme Being, Author, and Maker of all things: And, consequent to this, instil into him a love and reverence of this supreme Being." We are already more than half-way from Unitarianism to deism.

Indeed, the theism of Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding* undermined even his Unitarian Scripturalism, inasmuch as it denies, albeit confusedly, that revelation can ever override reason. In one passage he declares that "reason is natural revelation," while "revelation is natural reason enlarged by a new set of discoveries communicated by God immediately, which reason vouchsafes the truth of."[2] This compromise appears to be borrowed from Spinoza, who had put it with similar vagueness in his great *Tractatus*,[3] of which pre-eminent work Locke cannot have been ignorant, though he protested himself little read in the works of Hobbes and Spinoza, "those justly decried names."[4] The *Tractatus* being translated into English in the same year with the publication of the *Essay*, its influence would concur with Locke's in a widened circle of readers; and the substantially naturalistic doctrine of both books inevitably promoted the deistic movement. We have Locke's own avowal that he had many doubts as to the Biblical narratives;[5] and he never attempts to remove the doubts of others. Since, however, his doctrine provided a sphere for revelation on the territory of ignorance, giving it prerogative where its assertions

[1] *Of Education*, § 136.
[2] *Essay*, bk. iv, ch. xix, § 4.
[3] *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, c. 15.
[4] *Third Letter to the Bishop of Worcester.*
[5] *Some Familiar Letters between Mr. Locke and Several of his Friends*, 1708, pp. 302-304.

were outside knowledge, it counted substantially for Unitarianism insofar as it did not lead to deism.

> See the *Essay*, bk. iv, ch. xviii. Locke's treatment of revelation may be said to be the last and most attenuated form of the doctrine of "two-fold truth." On his principle, any proposition in a professed revelation that was not provable or disprovable by reason and knowledge must pass as true. His final position, that "whatever *is* divine revelation ought to overrule *all* our opinions" (bk. iv, ch. xviii, § 10), is tolerably elastic, inasmuch as he really reserves the question of the actuality of revelation. Thus he evades the central issue. Naturally he was by critical foreigners classed as a deist. Cp. Gostwick, *German Culture and Christianity*, 1882, p. 36. The German historian Tennemann sums up that Clarke wrote his apologetic works because "the consequences of the empiricism of Locke had become so decidedly favourable to the cause of atheism, skepticism, materialism, and irreligion" (*Manual of the Hist. of Philos.* Eng. tr. Bohn ed. § 349).

In his "practical" treatise on *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (1695) Locke played a similar part. It was inspired by the genuine concern for social peace which had moved him to write an essay on Toleration as early as 1667,[1] and to produce from 1685 onwards his famous *Letters on Toleration*, by far the most persuasive appeal of the kind that had yet been produced;[2] all the more successful so far as it went, doubtless, because the first Letter ended with a memorable capitulation to bigotry: "Lastly, those are not at all to be tolerated who deny the being of God. Promises, covenants, and oaths, which are the bonds of human society, can have no hold upon an atheist. The taking away of God, though but even in thought, dissolves all. *Besides, also, those that by their atheism undermine and destroy all religion can have no pretence of religion whereupon to challenge the privilege of a toleration.*" This handsome endorsement of the religion which had repeatedly "dissolved all" in a pandemonium of internecine hate, as compared with the one heresy which had never broken treaties or shed blood, is presumably more of a prudent surrender to normal fanaticism than an expression of the philosopher's own state of mind;[3] and his treatise on *The Reasonableness of Christianity* is an attempt to limit religion to a

[1] Fox Bourne, *Life of Locke*, 1876, ii, 34.

[2] The first Letter, written while he was hiding in Holland in 1685, was in Latin, but was translated into French, Dutch, and English.

[3] Mr. Fox Bourne, in his biography (ii, 41), apologizes for the lapse, so alien to his own ideals, by the remark that "the atheism then in vogue was of a very violent and rampant sort." It is to be feared that this palliation will not hold good—at least, the present writer has been unable to trace the atheism in question. For "atheism" we had better read "religion."

humane ethic, with sacraments and mysteries reduced to ceremonies, while claiming that the gospel ethic was "now with divine authority established into a legible law, far surpassing all that philosophy and human reason had attained to."[1] Its effect was, however, to promote rationalism without doing much to mitigate the fanaticism of belief.

> Locke's practical position has been fairly summed up by Prof. Bain: "Locke proposed, in his *Reasonableness of Christianity*, to ascertain the exact meaning of Christianity, by casting aside all the glosses of commentators and divines, and applying his own unassisted judgment to spell out its teachings.....The fallacy of his position obviously was that he could not strip himself of his education and acquired notions.....He seemed unconscious of the necessity of trying to make allowance for his unavoidable prepossessions. In consequence, he simply fell into an old groove of received doctrines; and these he handled under the set purpose of simplifying the fundamentals of Christianity to the utmost. Such purpose was not the result of his Bible study, but of his wish to overcome the political difficulties of the time. He found, by keeping close to the Gospels and making proper selections from the Epistles, that the belief in Christ as the Messiah could be shown to be the central fact of the Christian faith; that the other main doctrines followed out of this by a process of reasoning; and that, as all minds might not perform the process alike, these doctrines could not be essential to the practice of Christianity. He got out of the difficulty of framing a creed, as many others have done, by simply using Scripture language, without subjecting it to any very strict definition; certainly without the operation of stripping the meaning of its words, to see what it amounted to. That his short and easy method was not very successful the history of the deistical controversy sufficiently proves" (*Practical Essays*, pp. 226–27).

That Locke was felt to have injured orthodoxy is further proved by the many attacks made on him from the orthodox side. Even the first Letter on Toleration elicited retorts, one of which claims to demonstrate "the Absurdity and Impiety of an Absolute Toleration."[2] On his positive teachings he was assailed by Bishop Stillingfleet; by the Rev. John Milner, B.D.; by the Rev. John Morris; by William Carrol; and by the Rev. John Edwards, B.D.;[3] his only assailant with a rationalistic repute being Dr. Thomas Burnet. Some attacked him on his *Essays;* some on his *Reasonableness of Christianity;* orthodoxy finding in both the same tendency to "subvert the nature

[1] *Second Vindication of "The Reasonableness of Christianity,"* 1697, pref.
[2] Fox Bourne, *Life of Locke*, ii, 181.
[3] Son of the Presbyterian author of the famous *Gangræna*.

and use of divine revelation and faith."[1] In the opinion of the Rev. Mr. Bolde, who defended him in *Some Considerations* published in 1699, the hostile clericals had treated him "with a rudeness peculiar to some who make a profession of the Christian religion, and seem to pride themselves in being the clergy of the Church of England."[2] This is especially true of Edwards, a notably ignoble type;[3] but hardly of Milner, whose later *Account of Mr. Lock's Religion out of his Own Writings, and in his Own Words* (1700), pressed him shrewdly on the score of his "Socinianism." In the eyes of a pietist like William Law, again, Locke's conception of the infant mind as a *tabula rasa* was "dangerous to religion," besides being philosophically false.[4] Yet Locke agreed with Law[5] that moral obligation is dependent solely on the will of God—a doctrine denounced by the deist Shaftesbury as the negation of morality.

See the *Inquiry concerning Virtue or Merit*, pt. iii, § 2; and the *Letters to a Student*, under date June 3, 1709 (p. 403 in Rand's *Life, Letters, etc., of Shaftesbury*, 1900). The extraordinary letter of Newton to Locke, written just after or during a spell of insanity, first apologizes for having believed that Locke "endeavoured to embroil me with women and by other means," and goes on to beg pardon "for representing that you struck at the root of morality, in a principle you laid down in your book of ideas." In his subsequent letter, replying to that of Locke granting forgiveness and gently asking for details, he writes: "What I said of your book I remember not." (Letters of September 16 and October 5, 1693, given in Fox Bourne's *Life of Locke*, ii, 226–27, and Sir D. Brewster's *Memoirs of Sir Isaac Newton*, 1855, ii, 148–51.) Newton, who had been on very friendly terms with Locke, must have been repeating, when his mind was disordered, criticisms otherwise current. After printing in full the letters above cited, Brewster insists, on his principle of sacrificing all other considerations to Newton's glory (cp. De Morgan, *Newton: his Friend: and his Niece*, 1885, pp. 99–111), that all the while Newton was "in the full possession of his mental powers." The whole diction of the first letter tells the contrary. If we are not to suppose that Newton had been temporarily insane, we must think of his judgment as even less rational, apart from physics, than it is

[1] Said by Carrol, *Dissertation on Mr. Lock's Essay*, 1706, cited by Anthony Collins, *Essay Concerning the Use of Reason*, 1709, p. 30.
[2] Cited by Fox Bourne, *Life of Locke*, ii, 438.
[3] Whose calibre may be gathered from his egregious doctoral thesis, *Concio ad clerum de dæmonum malorum existentia et natura* (1700). After a list of the deniers of evil spirits, from the Sadducees and Sallustius to Bekker and Van Dale, he addresses to his "dilectissimi in Christo fratres" the exordium: "En, Academici, veteres ac hodiernos Sadducæos! quibuscum tota Atheorum cohors amicissimè congruit; nam qui divinum numen, iidem ipsi infernales spiritus acriter negant."
[4] *Confutation of Warburton* (1757) in *Extracts from Law's Works*, 1768, i, 208–209.
[5] Cp. the *Essay*, bk. i, ch. iii, § 6, with Law's *Case of Reason*, in *Extracts*, as cited, p. 36.

seen to be in his dissertations on prophecy. Certainly Newton was at all times apt to be suspicious of his friends to the point of moral disease (see his attack on Montague, in his letter to Locke of January 26, 1691–1692: in Fox Bourne, ii, 218; and cp. De Morgan, as cited, p. 146); but the letter to Locke indicates a point at which the normal malady had upset the mental balance. It remains, nevertheless, part of the evidence as to bitter orthodox criticism of Locke.

On the whole, it is clear, the effect of his work, especially of his naturalistic psychology, was to make for rationalism; and his compromises furthered instead of checking the movement of unbelief. His ideal of practical and undogmatic Christianity, indeed, was hardly distinguishable from that of Hobbes,[1] and, as previously set forth by the Rev. Arthur Bury in his *Naked Gospel* (1690), was so repugnant to the Church that that book was burned at Oxford as heretical.[2] Locke's position as a believing Christian was indeed extremely weak, and could easily have been demolished by a competent deist, such as Collins,[3] or a skeptical dogmatist who could control his temper and avoid the gross misrepresentation so often resorted to by Locke's orthodox enemies. But by the deists he was valued as an auxiliary, and by many latitudinarian Christians as a helper towards a rationalistic if not a logical compromise.

Rationalism of one or the other tint, in fact, seems to have spread in all directions. Deism was ascribed to some of the most eminent public men. Bishop Burnet has a violent passage on Sir William Temple, to the effect that "He had a true judgment in affairs, and very good principles with relation to government, but in nothing else. He seemed to think that things are as they were from all eternity; at least he thought religion was only for the mob. He was a great admirer of the sect of Confucius in China, who were atheists themselves, but left religion to the rabble."[4] The praise of Confucius is the note of deism; and Burnet rightly held that no orthodox Christian in those days would sound it. Other prominent men revealed their religious liberalism. The accomplished and influential George Savile, Marquis of Halifax, often spoken of as

[1] Cp. *Dynamics of Religion*, p. 122.

[2] Fox Bourne, ii, 404–405.

[3] An ostensibly orthodox Professor of our own day has written that Locke's doctrine as to religion and ethics "shows at once the sincerity of his religious convictions and the inadequate conception he had formed to himself of the grounds and nature of moral philosophy" (Fowler, *Locke*, 1880, p. 76).

[4] Burnet, *History of his Own Time*, ed. 1838, p. 251. Burnet adds that Temple "was a corrupter of all that came near him." The 1838 editor protests against the whole attack as the "most unfair and exaggerated" of Burnet's portraits; and a writer in *The Present State of the Republick of Letters*, Jan., 1736, p. 26, carries the defence to claiming orthodoxy for Temple. But the whole cast of his thought is deistic. Cp. the *Essay upon the Origin and Nature of Government*, and ch. v of the *Observations upon the United Provinces* (*Works*, ed. 1770, i, 29, 36, 170–74).

a deist, and even as an atheist, by his contemporaries,[1] appears clearly from his own writings to have been either that or a Unitarian;[2] and it is not improbable that the similar gossip concerning Lord Keeper Somers was substantially true.[3]

That Sir Isaac Newton was "some kind of Unitarian"[4] is proved by documents long withheld from publication, and disclosed only in the second edition of Sir David Brewster's *Memoirs*. There is indeed no question that he remained a mere scripturalist, handling the texts as such,[5] and wasting much time in vain interpretations of Daniel and the Apocalypse.[6] Temperamentally, also, he was averse to anything like bold discussion, declaring that "those at Cambridge ought not to judge and censure their superiors, but to obey and honour them, according to the law and the doctrine of passive obedience"[7] —this after he had sat on the Convention which deposed James II. In no aspect, indeed, apart from his supreme scientific genius, does he appear as morally[8] or intellectually pre-eminent; and even on the side of science he was limited by his theological presuppositions, as when he rejected the nebular hypothesis, writing to Bentley that "the growth of new systems out of old ones, without the mediation of a Divine power, seems to me apparently absurd."[9] There is therefore more than usual absurdity in the proclamation of his pious biographer that "the apostle of infidelity cowers beneath the implied rebuke"[10] of his orthodoxy. The very anxiety shown by Newton and his friends[11] to checkmate "the infidels" is a proof that his religious work was not scientific even in inception, but the expression of his neurotic side; and the attempt of some of his scientific admirers to show that his religious researches belong solely to the years of his decline is a corresponding oversight. Newton was always pathologically prepossessed on the side of his religion, and subordinated his science to his theology even in the *Principia*. It is therefore all the more significant of the set of opinion in his day that, tied as he was to Scriptural interpretations, he drew away from orthodox dogma as to the Trinity. Not only does he show himself a destructive critic of Trinitarian texts and an opponent of Athanasius[12]: he expressly formulates the propositions (1) that "there is one God the Father.....and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus"; (2) that "the Father is the

[1] Cp. Macaulay, *History*, ch. ii. Student's ed. i, 120.
[2] Compare his *Advice to a Daughter*, § 1 (in *Miscellanies*, 1700), and his *Political Thoughts and Reflections: Religion*.
[3] See Macaulay, ch. xx. Student's ed. ii, 459.
[4] De Morgan, as cited, p. 107.
[5] See Brewster, ii, 318, 321–22, 323, 331 *sq.*,342 *sq.*
[6] *Id.* p. 327 *sq.*
[7] *Id.* p. 115.
[8] Cp. De Morgan, pp. 133–45.
[9] *Four Letters from Sir Isaac Newton to Dr. Bentley*, ed. 1756, p. 25. Cp. *Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 97–102.
[10] Brewster, ii, 314.
[11] *Id.* pp. 315–16.
[12] *Id*, pp. 342–46.

invisible God whom no eye hath seen or can see. All other beings are sometimes visible"; and (3) that "the Father *hath* life in himself, and hath *given* the Son to have life in himself."[1] Such opinions, of course, could not be published: under the Act of 1697 they would have made Newton liable to loss of office and all civil rights. In his own day, therefore, his opinions were rather gossipped-of than known;[2] but insofar as his heresy was realized, it must have wrought much more for unbelief than could be achieved for orthodoxy by his surprisingly commonplace strictures on atheism, which show the ordinary inability to see what atheism means.

The argument of his *Short Scheme of True Religion* brackets atheism with idolatry, and goes on: "Atheism is so senseless and odious to mankind that it never had many professors. *Can it be by accident* that all birds, beasts, and men have their right side and left side alike shaped (except in their bowels), and just two eyes, and no more, on either side of the face?" etc. (Brewster, ii, 347). The logical implication is that a monstrous organism, with the sides unlike, represents "accident," and that in that case there has either been no causation or no "purpose" by Omnipotence. It is only fair to remember that no avowedly "atheistic" argument could in Newton's day find publication; but his remarks are those of a man who had never contemplated philosophically the negation of his own religious sentiment at the point in question. Brewster, whose judgment and good faith are alike precarious, writes that "When Voltaire asserted that Sir Isaac explained the prophecies in the same manner as those who went before him, he only exhibited his ignorance of what Newton wrote, and what others had written" (ii, 331, *note;* 355). The writer did not understand what he censured. Voltaire meant that Newton's treatment of prophecy is on the same plane of credulity as that of his orthodox predecessors.

Even within the sphere of the Church the Unitarian tendency, with or without deistic introduction, was traceable. Archbishop Tillotson (d. 1694) was often accused of Socinianism; and in the next generation was smilingly spoken of by Anthony Collins as a leading Freethinker. The pious Dr. Hickes had in fact declared of the Archbishop that "he caused several to turn atheists and ridicule the priesthood and religion."[3] The heresy must have been encouraged even within the Church by the scandal which broke out when Dean Sherlock's *Vindication* of Trinitarianism (1690), written in reply to

[1] Brewster, p. 349. See the remaining articles, and App. XXX, p. 532. [2] *Id.* p. 388.
[3] *Discourse on Tillotson and Burnet*, pp. 38, 40, 74, cited by Collins, *Discourse of Freethinking*, 1713, pp. 171–72.

a widely-circulated antitrinitarian compilation,[1] was attacked by Dean South[2] as the work of a Tritheist. The plea of Dr. Wallis, Locke's old teacher, that a doctrine of "three somewhats"—he objected to the term "persons"—in one God was as reasonable as the concept of three dimensions,[3] was of course only a heresy the more. Outside the Church, William Penn, the great Quaker, held a partially Unitarian attitude;[4] and the first of his many imprisonments was on a charge of "blasphemy and heresy" in respect of his treatise *The Sandy Foundation Shaken*, which denied (1) that there were in the One God "three distinct and separate persons"; (2) the doctrine of the need of "plenary satisfaction"; and (3) the justification of sinners by "an imputative righteousness." But though many of the early Quakers seem to have shunned the doctrine of the Trinity, Penn really affirmed the divinity of Christ, and was not a Socinian but a Sabellian in his theology. Positive Unitarianism all the while was being pushed by a number of tracts which escaped prosecution, being prudently handled by Locke's friend, Thomas Firmin.[5] A new impulse had been given to Unitarianism by the learning and critical energy of the Prussian Dr. Zwicker, who had settled in Holland;[6] and among those Englishmen whom his works had found ready for agreement was Gilbert Clerke (b. 1641), who, like several later heretics, was educated at Sidney College, Cambridge. In 1695 he published a Unitarian work entitled *Anti-Nicenismus*, and two other tracts in Latin, all replying to the orthodox polemic of Dr. Bull, against whom another Unitarian had written *Considerations on the Explications of the Doctrine of the Trinity* in 1694, bitterly resenting his violence.[7] In 1695 appeared yet another treatise of the same school, *The Judgment of the Fathers concerning the Doctrine of the Trinity*. Much was thus done on Unitarian lines to prepare an audience for the deists of the next reign.[8] But the most effective influence was probably the ludicrous strife of the orthodox clergy as to what orthodoxy was. The fray over the doctrine of the Trinity waxed so

[1] The *Brief Notes on the Creed of St. Athanasius* (author unknown), printed by Thomas Firmin. Late in 1693 appeared another antitrinitarian tract, by William Freke, who was prosecuted, fined £500, and ordered to make a recantation in the Four Courts of Westminster Hall. The book was burnt by the hangman. Wallace, Art. 354. There had also been "two quarto volumes of tracts in support of Unitarianism," published in 1691 (Dr. W. H. Drummond, *An Explanation and Defence of the Principles of Protestant Dissent*, 1842, p. 17).

[2] "Locke's ribald schoolfellow of nearly fifty years ago" (Fox Bourne, ii, 405).

[3] *Id. ib.*

[4] Tayler, *Retrospect*, p. 226; Wallace, *Antitrinitarian Biography*, i, 160–69.

[5] Fox Fourne, ii, 405; Wallace, art. 353.

[6] Above, pp. 35–36.

[7] Nelson's *Life of Bishop Bull*, 2nd ed. 1714, p. 398.

[8] "Perhaps at no period was the Unitarian controversy so actively carried on in England as between 1690 and 1720." *History, Opinions*, etc., *of the English Presbyterians*, 1834, p. 22.

furious, and the discredit cast on orthodoxy was so serious,[1] that in the year 1700 an Act of Parliament was passed forbidding the publication of any more works on the subject.

Meanwhile the so-called Latitudinarians,[2] all the while aiming as they did at a non-dogmatic Christianity, served as a connecting medium for the different forms of liberal thought; and a new element of critical disintegration was introduced by a speculative treatment of Genesis in the *Archæologiæ Philosophicæ* (1692) of Dr. Thomas Burnet, a professedly orthodox scholar, Master of the Charterhouse and chaplain in ordinary to King William, who nevertheless treated the Creation and Fall stories as allegories, and threw doubt on the Mosaic authorship of parts of the Pentateuch. Though the book was dedicated to the king, it aroused so much clerical hostility that the king was obliged to dismiss him from his post at court.[3] His ideas were partly popularized through a translation of two of his chapters, with a vindicatory letter, in Blount's *Oracles of Reason* (1695); and that they had considerable vogue may be gathered from the *Essay towards a Vindication of the Vulgar Exposition of the Mosaic History of the Fall of Adam*, by John Witty, published in 1705. Burnet, who published three sets of anonymous *Remarks* on the philosophy of Locke (1697–1699), criticizing its sensationist basis, figured after his death (1715), in posthumous publications, as a heretical theologian in other regards; and then played his part in the general deistic movement; but his allegorical view of Genesis does not seem to have seriously affected speculation in his time, the bulk of the debate turning on his earlier *Telluris Theoria Sacra* (1681; trans. 1684), to which there were many rejoinders, both scientific and orthodox. On this side he is unimportant, his science being wholly imaginative; and in the competition between his *Theory* and J. Woodward's *Essay towards a Natural History of the Earth* (1695) nothing was achieved for scientific progress.

Much more remarkable, but outside of popular discussion, were the *Evangelium medici* (1697) of Dr. B. CONNOR, wherein the gospel

[1] Cp. *Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 113–15 --Tayler, *Retrospect*, p. 227.

[2] As to whom see Tayler, *Retrospect*, ch. v, § 4. They are spoken of as "the new sect of Latitude-Men" in 1662; and in 1708 are said to be "at this day Low Churchmen." See *A Brief Account of the New Sect of Latitude-Men*, by "S. P." of Cambridge, 1662, reprinted in *The Phenix*, vol. ii, 1708, and pref. to that vol. From "S. P.'s" account it is clear that they connected with the new scientific movement, and leant to Cartesianism. As above noted, they included such prelates as Wilkins and Tillotson. The work of E. A. George, *Seventeenth Century Men of Latitude* (1908), deals with Hales, Chillingworth, Whichcote, H. More, Taylor, Browne, and Baxter.

[3] Toulmin, *Histor. View of the Prot. Dissenters*, 1814, p. 270. A main ground of the offence taken was a somewhat trivial dialogue in Burnet's book between Eve and the serpent, indicating the "popular" character of the tale. This was omitted from a Dutch edition at the author's request, and from the 3rd ed. 1733 (Toulmin, as cited). It is given in the partial translation in Blount's *Oracles of Reason*.

miracles were explained away, on lines later associated with German rationalism, as natural phenomena; and the curious treatise of Newton's friend, John Craig,[1] *Theologiæ christianæ principia mathematica* (1699), wherein it is argued that all evidence grows progressively less valid in course of time;[2] and that accordingly the Christian religion will cease to be believed about the year 3144, when probably will occur the Second Coming. Connor, when attacked, protested his orthodoxy; Craig held successively two prebends of the Church of England;[3] and both lived and died unmolested, probably because they had the prudence to write in Latin, and maintained gravity of style. About this time, further, the title of "Rationalist" made some fresh headway as a designation, not of unbelievers, but of believers who sought to ground themselves on reason. Such books as those of Clifford and Boyle tell of much discussion as to the efficacy of "reason" in religious things; and in 1686, as above noted, there appears *A Rational Catechism*,[4] a substantially Unitarian production, notable for its aloofness from evangelical feeling, despite its many references to Biblical texts in support of its propositions. In the *Essays Moral and Divine* of the Scotch judge, Sir William Anstruther, published in 1701, there is a reference to "those who arrogantly term themselves Rationalists"[5] in the sense of claiming to find Christianity not only, as Locke put it, a reasonable religion, but one making no strain upon faith. Already the term had become potentially one of vituperation, and it is applied by the learned judge to "the wicked reprehended by the Psalmist."[6] Forty years later, however, it was still applied rather to the Christian who claimed to believe upon rational grounds than to the deist or unbeliever;[7] and it was to have a still longer lease of life in Germany as a name for theologians who believed in "Scripture" on condition that all miracles were explained away.

[1] See Brewster's *Memoirs of Newton*, 1855, ii. 315–16, for a letter indicating Craigs' religious attitude. He contributed to Dr. George Cheyne's *Philosophical Principles of Religion, Natural and Revealed*, 1705. (Pref. to pt. i, ed. 1725.)

[2] See the note of Pope and Warburton on the *Dunciad*, iv, 462.

[3] See arts. in *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*

[4] Reprinted at Amsterdam, 1712.

[5] *Essays* as cited, p. 84.

[6] *Id.* p. 30.

[7] See *Christianity not Founded on Argument* (by Henry Dodwell, jr.), 1741, pp. 11, 34. Waterland, as cited by Bishop Hurst, treats the terms *Reasonist* and *Rationalist* as labels or nicknames of those who untruly profess to reason more scrupulously than other people. The former term may, however, have been set up as a result of Le Clerc's rendering of "the *Logos*," in John i, 1, by "Reason"—an argument to which Waterland repeatedly refers.

Chapter XV

FRENCH AND DUTCH FREETHOUGHT IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

1. We have seen France, in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, pervaded in its upper classes by a freethought partly born of the knowledge that religion counted for little but harm in public affairs, partly the result of such argumentation as had been thrown out by Montaigne and codified by Charron. That it was not the freethinking of mere idle men of the world is clear when we note the names and writings of La Mothe le Vayer (1588–1672), Gui Patin (1601–1671), and Gabriel Naudé (1600–1653), all scholars, all heretics of the skeptical and rationalistic order. The last two indeed, sided with the Catholics in politics, Patin approving of the Fronde, and Naudé of the Massacre, on which ground they are sometimes claimed as believers.[1] But though in the nature of the case their inclusion on the side of freethought is not to be zealously contended for, they must be classed in terms of the balance of testimony. Patin was the admiring friend of Gassendi; and though he was never explicitly heretical, and indeed wrote of Socinianism as a pestilent doctrine,[2] his habit of irony and the risk of written avowals to correspondents must be kept in view in deciding on his cast of mind. He is constantly anti-clerical;[3] and the germinal skepticism of Montaigne and Charron clearly persists in him.

> It is true that, as one critic puts it, such rationalists were not "quite clear whither they were bound. At first sight," he adds, "no one looks more negative than Gui Patin.....He was always congratulating himself on being 'delivered from the nightmare'; and he rivals the eighteenth century in the scorn he pours on priests, monks, and especially 'that black Loyolitic scum from Spain' which called itself the Society of Jesus. Yet Patin was

[1] Prof. Strowski, who is concerned to prove that the freethinkers of the period were mostly men-about-town, claims Patin as a Frondeur (*De Montaigne à Pascal*, p. 215). But Patin's attitude in this matter was determined by his detestation of Mazarin, whom he regarded as an arch-scoundrel. Naudé's defence of the Massacre is forensic.

[2] *Lettres de Gui Patin*, No. 188, édit. Reveillé-Parise, 1846, i, 364.

[3] Cp. Reveillé-Parise, as cited, *Notice sur Gui Patin*, pp. xxiii–xxvii, and Bayle, art. Patin.

no freethinker. Skeptics who made game of the kernel of religion came quite as much under the lash of his tongue as bigots who dared defend its husks. His letters end with the characteristic confession: '*Credo in Deum, Christum crucifixum, etc.;.....De minimis non curat prætor*'" (Viscount St. Cyres in *Cambridge Modern History*, v, 73). But the last statement is an error, and Patin did not attack Gassendi, though he did Descartes. He says of Rabelais: "C'étoit un homme qui se moquoit de tout; en verité il y a bien des choses dont on doit raisonnablement se moquer.....elles sont presque tous remplies de vanité, d'imposture et d'ignorance: ceux qui sont un peu philosophes ne doivent-ils pas s'en moquer?" (Lett. 485, éd. cited, iii, 148). Again he writes that "la vie humaine n'est qu'un bureau de rencontre et un théâtre sur lesquels domine la fortune" (Lett. 726, iii, 620). This is pure Montaigne. The formula cited by Viscount St. Cyres is neither a general nor a final conclusion to the letters of Patin. It occurs, I think, only once (18 juillet, 1642, à M. Belin) in the 836 letters, and *not* at the end of that one (Lett. 55, éd. cited, i, 90).

Concerning his friend Naudé, Patin writes: "Je suis fort de l'avis de feu M. Naudé, qui disoit qu'il y avait quatre choses dont il se fallait garder, afin de n'être point trompé, savoir, de prophéties, de miracles, de révélations, et d'apparitions" (Lett. 353, éd. cited, ii, 490). Again, he writes of a symposium of Naudé, Gassendi, and himself: "Peut-étre, tous trois, guéris de loup-garou et delivrés du mal des scrupules, qui est le tyran des consciences, nous irons peut-être jusque fort près du sanctuaire. Je fis l'an passé ce voyage de Gentilly avec M. Naudé, moi seul avec lui tête-à-tête; il n'y avait point de témoins, aussi n'y en falloit-il point: nous y parlâmes fort librement de tout, sans que personne en ait été scandalisé" (Lett. 362, ii, 508). This seems tolerably freethinking.

All that the Christian editor cares to claim upon the latter passage is that assuredly "l'unité de Dieu, l'immortalité de l'âme, l'égalité des hommes devant la loi, ces verités fondamentales de la raison *et consacrées par le Christianisme*, y étaient placées au premier rang" in the discussion. As to the skepticism of Naudé the editor remarks: "Ce qu'il y a de remarquable, c'est que Gui Patin soutenait que son ami.....avait puisé son opinion, en général très peu orthodoxe, en Italie, pendant le long séjour qu'il fit dans ce pays avec le cardinal Bagni" (ii, 490; cp. Lett. 816; iii, 758, where Naudé is again cited as making small account of religion).

Certainly Patin and Naudé are of less importance for freethought than La Mothe le Vayer. That scholar, a "Conseiller d'Estat ordinaire," tutor of the brother of Louis XIV, and one of the early members of the new Academy founded by Richelieu, is an interesting

figure[1] in the history of culture, being a skeptic of the school of Sextus Empiricus, and practically a great friend of tolerance. Standing in favour with Richelieu, he wrote at that statesman's suggestion a treatise *On the Virtue of the Heathen*,[2] justifying toleration by pagan example—a course which raises the question whether Richelieu himself was not strongly touched by the rationalism of his age. If it be true that the great Cardinal "believed as all the world did in his time,"[3] there is little more to be said; for unbelief, as we have seen, was already abundant, and even somewhat fashionable. Certainly no ecclesiastic in high power ever followed a less ecclesiastical policy;[4] and from the date of his appointment as Minister to Louis XIII (1624), for forty years, there was no burning of heretics or unbelievers in France. If he was orthodox, it was very passively.[5]

And Le Vayer's way of handling the dicta of St. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas as to the virtues of unbelievers being merely vices is for its time so hardy that the Cardinal's protection alone can explain its immunity from censure. St. Augustine and St. Thomas, says the critic calmly, had regard merely to eternal happiness, which virtue alone can obtain for no one. They are, therefore, to be always interpreted in this special sense. And so at the very outset the ground is summarily cleared of orthodox obstacles.[6] The *Petit discours chrétien sur l'immortalité de l'âme*, also addressed to Richelieu, tells of a good deal of current unbelief on that subject; and the epistle dedicatory professes pain over the "philosopher of our day [Vanini] who has had the impiety to write that, unless one is very old, very rich, and a German, one should never expatiate on this subject." But on the very threshold of the discourse, again, the skeptic tranquilly suggests that there would be "perhaps something unreasonable" in following Augustine's precept, so popular in later times, that the problem of immortality should be solved by the dictates of religion and feeling, not of "uncertain" reason. "Why," he asks, "should the soul be her own judge?"[7] And he shows a distinct appreciation of the avowal of Augustine in his *Retractationes* that his own book on the Immortality of the Soul was so obscure to him that in many places he himself could not understand it.[8] The

[1] See the notices of him in Owen's *Skeptics of the French Renaissance;* and in Sainte-Beuve, *Port Royal*, iii, 180, etc.

[2] *De la Vertu des Payens*, in t. v. of the 12mo ed. of *Œuvres*, 1669.

[3] Hanotaux, *Hist. du Cardinal de Richelieu*, 1893, i, pref. p. 7.

[4] Cp. Buckle, ch. viii, 1–vol. ed. pp. 305–10, 325–28.

[5] See the good criticism of M. Hanotaux in Perrens, *Les Libertins en France au xvii. siècle*, p. 95 *sq.*

[6] *Œuvres*, ed. 1669, v, 4 *sq.* Bellarmin, as Le Vayer shows, had similarly explained away Augustine. But the doctrine that heathen virtue was not true virtue had remained orthodox.

[7] Ed. cited, iv, 125.

[8] *Id.* pp. 123–24.

"Little Christian Discourse" is, in fact, not Christian at all; and its arguments are but dialectic exercises, on a par with those of the *Discours sceptique sur la musique* which follows. He was, in short, a skeptic by temperament; and his *Préface d'une histoire*[1] shows his mind to have played on the "Mississippi of falsehood called history" very much as did that of Bayle in a later generation.

Le Vayer's *Dialogues of Oratius Tubero* (1633) is philosophically his most important work;[2] but its tranquil Pyrrhonism was not calculated to affect greatly the current thought of his day; and he ranked rather as a man of all-round learning[3] than as a polemist, being reputed "a little contradictory, but in no way bigoted or obstinate, all opinions being to him nearly indifferent, excepting those of which faith does not permit us to doubt."[4] The last phrase tells of the fact that it affects to negate: Le Vayer's general skepticism was well known.[5] He was not indeed an original thinker, most of his ideas being echoes from the skeptics of antiquity;[6] and it has been not unjustly said of him that he is rather of the sixteenth century than of the seventeenth.[7]

2. On the other hand, the resort on the part of the Catholics to a skeptical method, as against both Protestants and freethinkers, which we have seen originating soon after the issue of Montaigne's *Essais*, seems to have become more and more common; and this process must rank as in some degree a product of skeptical thought of a more sincere sort. In any case it was turned vigorously, even recklessly, against the Protestants. Thus we find Daillé, at the outset of his work *On the True Use of the Fathers*,[8] complaining that when Protestants quote the Scriptures some Romanists at once ask "whence and in what way those books may be known to be really written by the prophets and apostles whose names and titles they bear." This challenge, rashly incurred by Luther and Calvin in their pronouncements on the Canon, later Protestants did not as a rule attempt to meet, save in the fashion of La Placette, who in his work *De insanibili Ecclesiæ Romanæ Scepticismo* (1688)[9] under-

[1] Tom. iii, 251.

[2] He wrote very many, the final collection filling three volumes folio, and fifteen in duodecimo. The *Cinq Dialogues faits à l'imitation des Anciens* were pseudonymous, and are not included in the collected works.

[3] "On le régarde comme le Plutarque de notre siècle" (Perrault, *Les Hommes Illustres du XVIIe Siècle*, éd. 1701, ii, 131).

[4] Perrault, ii, 132.

[5] Bayle, *Dict.* art. LA MOTHE LE VAYER. Cp. introd. to *L'Esprit de la Mothe le Vayer*, par M. de M. C. D. S. P. D. L. (*i.e.* De Montlinot, chanoine de Saint Pierre de Lille (1763, pp. xviii, xxi, xxvi.

[6] M. Perrens, who endorses this criticism, does not note that some passages he quotes from the *Dialogues*, as to atheism being less disturbing to States than superstition, are borrowed from Bacon's essay *Of Atheism*, of which Le Vayer would read the Latin version.

[7] Perrens, p. 132.

[8] In French, 1631; in Latin, 1656, amended.

[9] Translated into English in 1688, and into French, under the title *Traité du Pyrrhonisme de l'église romaine*, by N. Chalaire, Amsterdam, 1721.

takes to show that Romanists themselves are without any grounds of certitude for the authority of the Church. It was indeed certain that the Catholic method would make more skeptics than it won.

3. Between the negative development of the doctrine of Montaigne and the vogue of upper-class deism, the philosophy of Descartes, with its careful profession of submission to the Church, had at first an easy reception; and on the appearance of the *Discours de la Méthode* (1637) it speedily affected the whole thought of France; the women of the leisured class, now much given to literature, being among its students.[1] From the first the Jansenists, who were the most serious religious thinkers of the time, accepted the Cartesian system as in the main soundly Christian; and its founder's authority had some such influence in keeping up the prestige of orthodoxy as had that of Locke later in England. Boileau, who wrote a satire in defence of the system when it was persecuted after Descartes's death, is named among those whom he so influenced.[2] But a merely external influence of this kind could not counteract the fundamental rationalism of Descartes's thought, and the whole social and intellectual tendency towards a secular view of life. Soon, indeed, Descartes became suspect, partly by reason of the hostile activities of the Jesuits, who opposed him because the Jansenists generally held by him, though he had been a Jesuit pupil, and had always some adherents in that order;[3] partly by reason of the inherent naturalism of his system. That his doctrine was incompatible with the eucharist was the standing charge against it,[4] and his defence was not found satisfactory,[5] though his orthodox followers obtained from Queen Christina a declaration that he had been largely instrumental in converting her to Catholicism.[6] Pascal reproached him with having done his best to do without God in his system;[7] and this seems to have been the common clerical impression. Thirteen years after his death, in 1663, his work was placed on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, under a modified censure,[8] and in 1671 a royal order was obtained under which his philosophy was proscribed in all the universities of France.[9] Cartesian professors and curés were persecuted and exiled, or

1 Bouillier, *Hist. de la Philos. cartésienne*, 1854, i, 410 *sq.*, 420 *sq.*; Lanson, *Hist de la litt. française*, 5e édit. p. 396; Brunetière, *Etudes Critiques*, 3e série, p. 2; Buckle, 1-vol. ed. p. 338. Bouillier notes (i, 426) that the *femmes savantes* ridiculed by Molière are Cartesians.

2 Bouillier, i, 456; Lanson, p. 397. 3 Bouillier, i, 411 *sq.* 4 *Id.* p. 431 *sq.*

5 *Id.* p. 437 *sq.* 6 *Id.* pp. 449–50.

7 "Il disait très souvent," said Pascal's niece:—"Je ne puis pardonner à Descartes; il aurait bien voulu, dans toute sa philosophie, pouvoir se passer de Dieu; mais il n'a pu s'empêcher de lui accorder une chiquenade, pour mettre le monde en mouvement; après cela il n'a plus que faire de Dieu." *Récit de Marguerite Perier* ("De ce que j'ai ouï dire par M. Pascal, mon oncle"), rep. with *Pensées*, ed. 1853, pp. 38–39.

8 Bouillier, p. 453. 9 *Id.* p. 455 *sq.*

compelled to recant; among the victims being Père Lami of the Congregation of the Oratory and Père André the Jesuit;[1] and the Oratorians were in 1678 forced to undergo the humiliation of not only renouncing Descartes and all his works, but of abjuring their former Cartesian declarations, in order to preserve their corporate existence.[2] Precisely in this period of official reaction, however, there was going on not merely an academic but a social development of a rationalistic kind, in which the persecuted philosophy played its part, even though some freethinkers disparaged it.

4. The general tendency is revealed on the one hand by the series of treatises from eminent Churchmen, defending the faith against unpublished attacks, and on the other hand by the prevailing tone in *belles lettres*. Malherbe, the literary dictator of the first quarter of the century, had died in 1628 with the character of a scoffer;[3] and the fashion now lasted till the latter half of the reign of Louis XIV. In 1621, two years after the burning of Vanini, a young man named Jean Fontanier had been burned alive on the Place de Grève at Paris, apparently for the doctrines laid down by him in a manuscript entitled *Le Trésor Inestimable*, written on deistic and anti-Catholic lines.[4] He was said to have been successively Protestant, Catholic, Turk, Jew, and atheist; and had conducted himself like one of shaken mind.[5] But the cases of the poet Théophile de Viau, who about 1623 suffered prosecution on a charge of impiety,[6] and of his companions Berthelot and Colletet—who like him were condemned but set free by royal favour—appear to be the only others of the kind for over a generation. Frivolity of tone sufficed to ward off legal pursuit. It was in 1665, some years after the death of Mazarin, who had maintained Richelieu's policy of tolerance, that Claude Petit was burnt at Paris for "impious pieces";[7] and even then there was no general reversion to orthodoxy, the upper-class tone remaining, as in the age of Richelieu and Mazarin, more or less unbelieving. When Corneille had introduced a touch of Christian zeal into his *Polyeucte* (1643) he had given general offence to the dilettants of both sexes.[8] Molière, again, the

[1] See Bouillier, i, 460 *sq.*; ii, 373 *sq.*; and introd. to *Œuvres philos. du Père Buffier*, 1846, p. 4; and cp. Rambaud, *Hist. de la civilisation française*, 6e édit. ii, 336.
[2] Bouillier, i, 465. [3] Perrens, pp. 84–85. [4] Cp. Perrens, pp. 68–69, and refs.
[5] Cp. Strowski, *De Montaigne à Pascal*, p. 141.
[6] See Duvernet, *Vie de Voltaire*, ch. i, and *note* 1; and Perrens, pp. 74–80.
[7] For all that is known of Petit see the Avertissement to Bibliophile Jacob's edition of *Paris ridicule et burlesque au 17ième siècle*, and refs. in Perrens, p. 153. After Petit's death, his friend Du Pelletier defended him as being a deist; but he seems in his youthful writings to have blasphemed at large, and he had been guilty of assassinating a young monk. He was burned, however, for blaspheming the Virgin.
[8] Guizot, *Corneille et son temps*, ed. 1880, p. 200. The circle of the Hôtel Rambouillet were especially hostile. Cp. l'alissot's note to *Polyeucte*, end. On the other hand, Corneille found it prudent to cancel four skeptical lines which he had originally put in the mouth of the pagan Severus, the sage of the piece. Perrens, *Les Libertins*, p. 140.

disciple of Gassendi[1] and "the very genius of reason,"[2] was unquestionably an unbeliever;[3] and only the personal protection of Louis XIV, which after all could not avail to support such a play as *Tartufe* against the fury of the bigots, enabled him to sustain himself at all against them.

5. Equally freethinking was his brilliant predecessor and early comrade, CYRANO DE BERGERAC (1620–1655), who did not fear to indicate his frame of mind in one of his dramas. In *La Mort d'Agrippine* he puts in the mouth of Sejanus, as was said by a contemporary, "horrible things against the Gods," notably the phrase, "whom men made, and who did not make men,"[4] which, however, generally passed as an attack on polytheism; and though there was certainly no blasphemous intention in the phrase, *Frappons, voilà l'hostie* [=*hostia*, victim], some pretended to regard it as an insult to the Catholic *host*.[5] At times Cyrano writes like a deist;[6] but in so many other passages does he hold the language of a convinced materialist, and of a scoffer at that,[7] that he can hardly be taken seriously on the former head.[8] In short, he was one of the first of the hardy freethinkers who, under the tolerant rule of Richelieu and Mazarin, gave clear voice to the newer spirit. Under any other government, he would have been in danger of his life: as it was, he was menaced with prosecutions; his *Agrippine* was forbidden; the first edition of his *Pédant joué* was confiscated; during his last illness there was an attempt to seize his manuscripts; and down till the time of the Revolution the editions of his works were eagerly bought up and destroyed by zealots.[9] His recent literary rehabilitation thus hardly serves to realize his importance in the history of freethought. Between Cyrano and Molière it would appear that there was little less of rationalistic ferment in the France of their day than in England. Bossuet avows in a letter to Huet in 1678 that impiety and unbelief abound more than ever before.[10]

1 Under whom he studied in his youth with a number of other notably independent spirits, among them Cyrano de Bergerac. See Sainte-Beuve's essay on Molière, prefixed to the Hachette edition. Molière held by Gassendi as against Descartes. Bouillier, i, 542 *sq.*

2 Constant Coquelin, art. "Don Juan" in the *International Review*, September, 1903, p. 61—an acute and scholarly study.

3 "Molière is a freethinker to the marrow of his bones" (Perrens, p. 280). Cp. Lanson, p. 520; Fournier, *Études sur Molière*, 1885, pp. 122–23; Soury, *Brèv. de l'hist. du matér.* p. 384. "Ginguené," writes Sainte-Beuve, "a publié une brochure pour montrer Rabelais précurseur de la révolution française; c'étoit inutile à prouver sur Molière" (essay cited).

4 Act II, sc. iv, in *Œuvres Comiques*, etc., ed. Jacob, rep. by Garnier, pp. 426–27.

5 See Jacob's note *in loc.*, ed. cited, p. 455.

6 *E.g.* his *Lettre contre un Pédant* (No. 13 of the *Lettres Satiriques* in ed. cited, p. 181), which, however, appears to have been mutilated in some editions; as one of the deistic sentences cited by M. Perrens, p. 247, does not appear in the reprint of Bibliophile Jacob.

7 *E.g.* the *Histoire des Oiseaux* in the *Histoire Comique des états et empires du Soleil*, ed. Jacob (Garnier), p. 278; and the *Fragment de Physique* (same vol.).

8 See the careful criticism of Perrens, pp. 248–50.

9 Bibliophile Jacob, pref. to ed. cited, pp. i–ii.

10 Perrens, p. 302. Compare Bossuet's earlier sermon for the Second Sunday of Advent,

6. Even in the apologetic reasoning of the greatest French prose writer of that age, Pascal, we have the most pregnant testimony to the prevalence of unbelief; for not only were the fragments preserved as *Pensées* (1670), however originated,[1] developed as part of a planned defence of religion against contemporary rationalism,[2] but they themselves show their author profoundly unable to believe save by a desperate abnegation of reason, though he perpetually commits the gross fallacy of trusting to reason to prove that reason is untrustworthy. His work is thus one continuous paralogism, in which reason is disparaged merely to make way for a parade of bad reasoning. The case of Pascal is that of Berkeley with a difference: the latter suffered from hypochondria, but reacted with nervous energy; Pascal, a physical degenerate, prematurely profound, was prematurely old; and his pietism in its final form is the expression of the physical collapse.

This is disputed by M. Lanson, an always weighty authority. He writes (p. 464) that Pascal was "neither mad nor ill" when he gave himself up wholly to religion. But ill he certainly was. He had *chronically* suffered from intense pains in the head from his eighteenth year; and M. Lanson admits (p. 451) that the *Pensées* were written in intervals of acute suffering. This indeed understates the case. Pascal several times told his family that since the age of eighteen he had never passed a day without pain. His sister, Madame Perier, in her biographical sketch, speaks of him as suffering "continual and ever-increasing maladies," and avows that the four last years of his life, in which he penned the fragments called *Pensées*, "were but a continual languishment." The Port Royal preface of 1670 says the same thing, speaking of the "four years of languor and malady in which he wrote all we have of the book he planned," and calling the *Pensées* "the feeble essays of a sick man." Cp. Pascal's *Prière pour demander à Dieu le bon usage des maladies:* and Owen *French Skeptics*, pp. 746, 784.

Doubtless the levity and licence of the *libertins* in high places[3] confirmed him in his revolt against unbelief; but his own credence was an act rather of despairing emotion than of rational conviction. The man who advised doubters to make a habit of causing masses to be said and following religious rites, on the score that *cela vous*

1665, cited by Perrens, pp. 253–54, where he speaks with something like fury of the free discussion around him.

[1] Cousin plausibly argues that Pascal began writing *Pensées* under the influence of a practice set up in her circle by Madame de Sablé. *Mme. de Sablé*, 5é édit. p. 124 *sq.*

[2] It is to be remembered that the work as published contained matter not Pascal's. Cp. Brunetière, *Études*, iii, 46–47; and the editions of the *Pensées* by Faugère and Havet.

[3] As to some of these see Perrens, pp. 158–69. They included the great Condé and some of the women in his circle; all of them unserious in their skepticism, and all "converted" when the physique gave the required cue.

fera croire et vous abêtira—"that will make you believe and will stupefy you"[1]—was a pathological case; and though the whole Jansenist movement latterly stood for a reaction against free-thinking, it can hardly be doubted that the *Pensées* generally acted as a solvent rather than as a sustainer of religious beliefs.[2] This charge was made against them immediately on their publication by the Abbé de Villars, who pointed out that they did the reverse of what they claimed to do in the matter of appealing to the heart and to good sense, since they set forth all the ordinary arguments of Pyrrhonism, denied that the existence of God could be established by reason or philosophy, and staked the case on a "wager" which shocked good sense and feeling alike. "Have you resolved," asks this critic in dialogue, "to make atheists on pretext of combatting them?"[3]

The same question arises concerning the famous *Lettres Provinciales* (1656), written by Pascal in defence of Arnauld against the persecution of the Jesuits, who carried on in Arnauld's case their campaign against Jansen, whom they charged with mis-stating the doctrine of Augustine in his great work expounding that Father. Once more the Catholic Church was swerving from its own established doctrine of predestination, the Spanish Jesuit Molina having set up a new movement in the Pelagian or Arminian direction. The cause of the Jansenists has been represented as that of freedom of thought and speech;[4] and this it relatively was insofar as Jansen and Arnauld sought for a hearing, while the Jesuit-ridden Sorbonne strove to silence and punish them. Pascal had to go from printer to printer as his Letters succeeded each other, the first three being successively prosecuted by the clerical authorities; and in their collected form they found publicity only by being printed at Rouen and published at Amsterdam, with the rubric of Cologne. All the while Jansenism claimed to be strict orthodoxy; and it was in virtue only of the irreducible element of rationalism in Pascal that the school of Port Royal made for freethought in any higher or more general sense. Indeed, between his own reputation for piety and that of the Jansenists for orthodoxy, the *Provincial Letters* have a conventional standing as orthodox compositions. It is strange, however, that those who charge upon the satire of the later philosophers the downfall of Catholicism in France should

[1] *Pensées*, ed. Faugère, ii, 168–69. The "abêtira" comes from Montaigne.

[2] Thus Mr. Owen treats Pascal as a skeptic, which philosophically he was, insofar as he really philosophized and did not merely catch at pleas for his emotional beliefs. "Les *Pensées* de Pascal," writes Prof. Le Dantec, "sont à mon avis le livre le plus capable de renforcer l'athéisme chez un athée" (*L'Athéisme*, 1906, pp. 24–25). They have in fact always had that effect.

[3] *De la Delicatesse*, 1671, dial. v, p. 329, etc.

[4] Vinet, *Études sur Blaise Pascal*, 3e édit. p. 267 *sq.*

not realize the plain tendency of these brilliant satires to discredit the entire authority of the Church, and, further, by their own dogmatic weaknesses, to put all dogma alike under suspicion.[1] Few thoughtful men can now read the *Provinciales* without being impressed by the utter absurdity of the problem over which the entire religious intelligence of a great nation was engrossed.

It was, in fact, the endless wrangles of the religious factions over unintelligible issues that more than any other single cause fostered the unbelief previously set up by religious wars;[2] and Pascal's writings only deepened the trouble. Even Bossuet, in his *History of the Variations of the Protestant Churches* (1688), did but throw a new light on the hollowness of the grounds of religion; and for thoughtful readers gave a lead rather to atheism than to Catholicism. The converts it would make to the Catholic Church would be precisely those whose adherence was of least value, since they had not even the temperamental basis which, rather than argument, kept Bossuet a believer, and were Catholics only for lack of courage to put all religion aside. When "variation" was put as a sign of error by a Churchman the bulk of whose life was spent in bitter strifes with sections of his own Church, critical people were hardly likely to be confirmed in the faith. Within ten years of writing his book against the Protestants, Bossuet was engaged in an acrid controversy with Fénelon, his fellow prelate and fellow demonstrator of the existence and attributes of God, accusing him of holding unchristian positions; and both prelates were always fighting their fellow-churchmen the Jansenists. If the variations of Protestants helped Catholicism, those of Catholics must have helped unbelief.

7. A similar fatality attended the labours of the learned Huet, Bishop of Avranches, whose *Demonstratio Evangelica* (1678) is remarkable (with Boyle's *Discourse of Things above Reason*) as anticipating Berkeley in the argument from the arbitrariness of mathematical assumptions. He too, by that and by his later works, made for sheer philosophical skepticism,[3] always a dangerous basis for orthodoxy.[4] Such an evolution, on the part of a man of

[1] Cp. the *Éloge de Pascal* by Bordas Demoulin in Didot ed. of the *Lettres*, 1854, pp. xxii–xxiii, and cit. from Saint-Beuve. Mark Pattison, it seems, held that the Jesuits had the best of the argument. See the *Letters of Lord Acton to Mary Gladstone*, 1904, p. 207. As regards the effect of Jansenism on belief, we find De Tocqueville pronouncing that "Le Jansenisme ouvrit.....la brêche par laquelle la philosophie du 18e siècle devait faire irruption" (*Hist. philos. du règne de Louis XV*, 1849, i, 2). This could truly be said of Pascal. [2] Cp. Voltaire's letter of 1768, cited by Morley, *Voltaire*, 4th ed. p. 159.

[3] Cp. Owen, *French Skeptics*, pp. 762–63, 767.

[4] This was expressly urged against Huet by Arnauld. See the *Notice* in Jourdain's ed of the *Logique de Port Royal*, 1854, p. xi; Perrens, *Les Libertins*, p. 301; and Bouillier *Hist. de la philos. cartésienne*, 1854, i, 595–96, where are cited the letters of Arnauld (Nos.

uncommon intellectual energy, challenges attention, the more so seeing that it typifies a good deal of thinking within the Catholic pale, on lines already noted as following on the debate with Protestantism. Honestly pious by bent of mind, but always occupied with processes of reasoning and research, Huet leant more and more, as he grew in years, to the skeptical defence against the pressures of Protestantism and rationalism, at once following and furthering the tendency of his age. That the skeptical method is a last weapon of defence can be seen from the temper in which the demonstrator assails Spinoza, whom he abuses, without naming him, in the fashion of his day, and to whose arguments concerning the authorship of the Pentateuch he makes singularly feeble answers.[1] They are too worthless to have satisfied himself; and it is easy to see how he was driven to seek a more plausible rebuttal.[2] A distinguished English critic, noting the general movement, pronounces, justly enough, that Huet took up philosophy "not as an end, but as a means—not for its own sake, but for the support of religion"; and then adds that his attitude is thus quite different from Pascal's.[3] But the two cases are really on a level. Pascal too was driven to philosophy in reaction against incredulity; and though Pascal's work is of a more bitter and morbid intensity, Huet also had in him that psychic craving for a supernatural support which is the essence of latter-day religion. And if we credit this spirit to Pascal and to Huet, as we do to Newman, we must suppose that it partly touched the whole movement of pro-Catholic skepticism which has been above noted as following on the Reformation. It is ascribing to it as a whole too much of calculation and strategy to say of its combatants that "they conceived the desperate design of first ruining the territory they were prepared to evacuate; before philosophy was handed over to the philosophers the old Aristotelean citadel was to be blown into the air."[4] In reality they caught, as religious men will, with passion rather than with policy, at any plea that might seem fitted to beat down the presumption of "the wild, living intellect of man";[5] and their skepticism had a certain sincerity inasmuch as, trained to uncritical belief, they had never found for themselves the grounds of rational certitude.

830, 834, and 837 in *Œuvres Compl.* iii, 396, 404, 424) denouncing Huet's Pyrrhonism as "impious" and perfectly adapted to the purposes of the freethinkers.

1 Cp. Alexandre Westphal, *Les Sources du Pentateuque*, i (1888), pp. 64-68.

2 Huet himself incurred a charge of temerity in his handling of textual questions. *Id.*, p. 66.

3 Pattison, *Essays*, 1889, i, 303-304.

4 Pattison, as cited.

5 "After all, a book [the Bible] cannot make a stand against the wild, living intellect of man." Newman, *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, 1st ed. p. 382; ed. 1875, p. 245. The same is said by Newman of religion in general (p. 243)

Inasmuch too as Protestantism had no such ground, and rationalism was still far from having cleared its bases, Huet, as things went, was within his moral rights when he set forth his transcendentalist skepticism in his *Quæstiones Alnetanæ* in 1690. Though written in very limpid Latin,[1] that work attracted practically no attention; and though, having a repute for provincialism in his French style, Huet was loth to resort to the vernacular, he did devote his spare hours through a number of his latter years to preparing his *Traité Philosophique de la faiblesse de l'esprit humain*, which, dying in 1722, he left to be published posthumously (1723). The outcry against his criticism of Descartes and his *Demonstratio* had indisposed him for further personal strife; but he was determined to leave a completed message. Thus it came about that a sincere and devoted Catholic bishop "left, as his last legacy to his fellow-men, a work of the most outrageous skepticism."[2]

8. Meanwhile the philosophy of Descartes, if less strictly propitious to science at some points than that of Gassendi, was both directly and indirectly making for the activity of reason. In virtue of its formal "spiritualism," it found access where any clearly materialistic doctrine would have been tabooed; so that we find the Cartesian ecclesiastic Régis not only eagerly listened to and acclaimed at Toulouse in 1665, but offered a civic pension by the magistrates[3] —this within two years of the placing of Descartes's works on the *Index*. After arousing a similar enthusiasm at Montpellier and at Paris, Régis was silenced by the Archbishop, whereupon he set himself to develop the Cartesian philosophy in his study. The result was that he ultimately went beyond his master, openly rejecting the idea of creation out of nothing,[4] and finally following Locke in rejecting the innate ideas which Descartes had affirmed.[5] Another young Churchman, Desgabets, developing from Descartes and his pupil Malebranche, combined with their "spiritist" doctrine much of the virtual materialism of Gassendi, arriving at a kind of pantheism, and at a courageous pantheistic ethic, wherein God is recognized as the author alike of good and evil[6]—a doctrine which we find even getting a hearing in general society, and noticed in the correspondence of Madame de Sévigné in 1677.[7]

Malebranche's treatise *De la Recherche de la Vérité* (1674) was

[1] Pattison disparages it as colourless, a fault he charges on Jesuit Latin in general. But by most moderns the Latin style of Huet will be found pure and pleasant.
[2] Pattison, *Essays*, i, 299. Cp. Bouillier, i, 595.
[3] Fontenelle, *Éloge sur Régis*; Bouillier, *Philos. cartés.* i, 507.
[4] *Réponse* to Huet's *Censura philosophiæ cartes.* 1691; Bouillier, i, 515.
[5] *Usage de la raison et de la foi*, 1704, liv. i, ptie. i, ch. vii; Bouillier, p. 511.
[6] Bouillier, i, 521–25.
[7] Lettre de 10 août, 1677, No. 591, éd. Nodier.

in fact a development of Descartes which on the one hand sought to connect his doctrine of innate ideas with his God-idea, and on the other hand headed the whole system towards pantheism. The tendency had arisen before him in the congregation of the Oratory, to which he belonged, and in which the Cartesian philosophy had so spread that when, in 1678, the alarmed superiors proposed to eradicate it, they were told by the members that, "If Cartesianism is a plague, there are two hundred of us who are infected."[1] But if Cartesianism alarmed the official orthodox, Malebranche wrought a deeper disintegration of the faith. In his old age his young disciple De Mairan, who had deeply studied Spinoza, pressed him fatally hard on the virtual coincidence of his philosophy with that of the more thoroughgoing pantheist; and Malebranche indignantly repudiated all agreement with "the miserable Spinoza,"[2] "the atheist,"[3] whose system he pronounced "a frightful and ridiculous chimera."[4] "Nevertheless, it was towards this chimera that Malebranche tended."[5] On all hands the new development set up new strife; and Malebranche, who disliked controversy, found himself embroiled alike with Jansenists and Jesuits, with orthodox and with innovating Cartesians, and with his own Spinozistic disciples. The Jansenist Arnauld attacked his book in a long and stringent treatise, *Des vrayes et des fausses idées* (1683),[6] accumulating denials and contradictions with a cold tenacity of ratiocination which never lapsed into passion, and was all the more destructive. For the Jansenists Malebranche was a danger to the faith in the ratio of his exaltation of it, inasmuch as reference of the most ordinary beliefs back to "faith" left them no ground upon which to argue up to faith.[7] This seems to have been a common feeling among his readers. For the same reason he made no appeal to men of science. He would have no recognition of secondary causes, the acceptance of which he declared to be a dangerous relapse into paganism.[8] There was thus no scientific principle in the new doctrine which could enable it to solve the problems or absorb the systems of other schools. Locke was as little moved by it as were the Jansenists. Malebranche won readers everywhere by his

[1] Bouillier, ii, 10.
[2] *Méditations chrétiennes*, ix, § 13.
[3] *Entretiens métaphysiques*, viii.
[4] *Id.* viii, ix.
[5] Bouillier, ii, 33. So Kuno Fischer: "In brief, Malebranche's doctrine, rightly understood, is Spinoza's" (*Descartes and his School*, Eng. tr. 1890, p. 589. Cp. p. 542).
[6] The work of Arnauld was reprinted in 1724 with a remarkable *Approbation* by Clavel, in which he eulogizes the style and the dialectic of Arnauld, and expresses the hope that the book may "guérir, s'il se peut, d'une étrange préoccupation et d'une excessive confiance, ceux qui enseignent ou soutiennent comme evident ce qu'il y a de plus dangereux dans la nouvelle philosophie non-obstant les défenses faites par le feu Roi Louis XIV à l'Université d'Angers en l'année 1675 et à l'Université de Paris aux années 1691 et 1704 de le laisser enseigner ou soutenir."
[7] *Des vrayes et des fausses idées*, ch. xxviii.
[8] *Recherche de la Vérité*, liv. vi, ptie ii, ch. iii.

charm of style;[1] but he was as much of a disturber as of a reconciler. The very controversies which he set up made for disintegration; and Fénelon found it necessary to "refute" Malebranche as well as Spinoza, and did his censure with as great severity as Arnauld's.[2] The mere fact that Malebranche put aside miracles in the name of divine law was fatal from the point of view of orthodoxy.

9. Yet another philosophic figure of the reign of Louis XIV, the Jesuit Père Buffier (1661–1737), deserves a passing notice here —out of his chronological order—though the historians of philosophy have mostly ignored him.[3] He is indeed of no permanent philosophic importance, being a precursor of the Scottish school of Reid, nourished on Locke, and somewhat on Descartes; but he is significant for the element of practical rationalism which pervades his reasoning, and which recommended him to Voltaire, Reid, and Destutt de Tracy. On the question of "primary truths in theology" he declares so boldly for the authority of revelation in all dogmas which pass comprehension, and for the non-concern of theology with any process of rational proof,[4] that it is hardly possible to suppose him a believer. On those principles, Islam has exactly the same authority as Christianity. In his metaphysic "he rejects all the ontological proofs of the existence of God, and, among others, the proof of Descartes from infinitude: he maintains that the idea of God is not innate, and that it can be reached only from consideration of the order of nature."[5] He is thus as much of a force for deism as was his master, Locke; and he outgoes him in point of rationalism when he puts the primary ethic of reciprocity as a universally recognized truth,[6] where Locke had helplessly fallen back on "the will of God." On the other hand he censures Descartes for not admitting the equal validity of other tests with that of primary consciousness, thus in effect putting himself in line with Gassendi. For the rest, his *Examen des préjugés vulgaires*, the most popular of his works, is so full of practical rationalism, and declares among other things so strongly in favour of free discussion, that its influence must have been wholly in the direction of free-thought. "Give me," he makes one of his disputants say, "a nation where they do not dispute, do not contest: it will be, I assure

[1] This was the main theme of the finished *Éloge* of Fontenelle, and was acknowledged by Bayle, Daguesseau, Arnauld, Bossuet, Voltaire, and Diderot, none of whom agreed with him. Bouillier, ii, 19. Fontenelle opposed Malebranche's philosophy in his *Doutes sur le système physique des causes occasionelles*. *Id.* p. 575. [2] Cp. Bouillier, ii, 260–61.

[3] He is not mentioned by Ueberweg, Lange, or Lewes. His importance in æsthetics, however, is recognized by some moderns, though he is not named in Mr. Bosanquet's *History of Æsthetic*. [4] *Traité des premières vérités*, 1724, §§ 521–31.

[5] Bouillier, introd. to Buffier's *Œuvres philosophiques*, 1846, p. xiii.

[6] *Remarques sur les principes de la metaphysique de Locke*, passages cited by Bouillier.

you, a very stupid and a very ignorant nation."[1] Such reasoning could hardly please the Jesuits,[2] and must have pleased freethinkers. And yet Buffier, like Gassendi, in virtue of his clerical status and his purely professional orthodoxy, escaped all persecution.

While an evolving Cartesianism, modified by the thought of Locke and the critical evolution of that, was thus reacting on thought in all directions, the primary and proper impulse of Descartes and Locke was doing on the Continent what that of Bacon had already done in England—setting men on actual scientific observation and experiment, and turning them from traditionalism of every kind. The more religious minds, as Malebranche, set their faces almost fanatically against erudition, thus making an enemy of the all-learned Huet,[3] but on the other hand preparing the way for the scientific age. For the rest we find the influence of Descartes at work in heresies at which he had not hinted. Finally we shall see it taking deep root in Holland, furthering a rationalistic view of the Bible and of popular superstitions.

10. Yet another new departure was made in the France of Louis XIV by the scholarly performance of RICHARD SIMON (1638–1712), who was as regards the Scriptural texts what Spencer of Cambridge was as regards the culture-history of the Hebrews, one of the founders of modern methodical criticism. It was as a devout Catholic refuting Protestants, and a champion of the Bible against Spinoza, that Simon began his work; but, more sincerely critical than Huet, he reached views more akin to those of Spinoza than to those of the Church.[4] The congregation of the Oratory, where Simon laid the foundations of his learning, was so little inclined to his critical views that he decided to leave it; and though persuaded to stay, and to become for a time a professor of philosophy at Julli, he at length broke with the Order. Then, from his native town of Dieppe, came his strenuous series of critical works—*L'histoire critique du Vieux Testament* (1678), which among other things decisively impugned the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch; the *Histoire critique du texte du Nouveau Testament* (Rotterdam, 1689); numerous other volumes of critical studies on texts, versions, and commentators; and finally a French translation of the New Testament with notes. His *Bibliothèque Critique* (4 vols. under the name of Saint-Jore) was suppressed by an order in council; the translation was condemned by Bossuet and the Archbishop of Paris;

[1] *Œuvres*, éd. Bouillier, p. 329. [2] Cp. Bouillier, *Hist. de la philos. cartés.* ii, 391.
[3] Malebranche, *Traité de Morale*, liv. ii, ch. 10. Cp. Bouillier, i, 582, 588–90; ii, 23.
[4] Cp. Westphal, *Les Sources du Pentateuque*, 1888, i, 67 *sq.*

and the two first-named works were suppressed by the Parlement of Paris and attacked by a host of orthodox scholars; but they were translated promptly into Latin and English; and they gave a new breadth of footing to the deistic argument, though Simon always wrote as an avowed believer.

Before Simon, the Protestant Isaac la Peyrère, the friend of La Mothe le Vayer and Gassendi, and the librarian of Condé, had fired a somewhat startling shot at the Pentateuch in his *Præadamitæ*[1] and *Systema Theologica ex Præ-adamitarum Hypothesi* (both 1655: printed in Holland[2]), for which he was imprisoned at Brussels, with the result that he recanted and joined the Church of Rome, going to the Pope in person to receive absolution, and publishing an *Epistola ad Philotimum* (Frankfort, 1658), in which he professed to explain his reasons for abjuring at once his Calvinism and his treatise. It is clear that all this was done to save his skin, for there is explicit testimony that he held firmly by his Preadamite doctrine to the end of his life, despite the seven or eight confutations of his work published in 1656.[3] Were it not for his constructive theses—especially his idea that Adam was a real person, but simply the father of the Hebrews and not of the human race—he would deserve to rank high among the scientific pioneers of modern rationalism, for his negative work is shrewd and sound. Like so many other early rationalists, collectively accused of "destroying without replacing," he erred precisely in his eagerness to build up, for his negations have all become accepted truths.[4] As it is, he may be ranked, after Toland, as a main founder of the older rationalism, developed chiefly in Germany, which sought to reduce as many miracles as possible to natural events misunderstood. But he was too far before his time to win a fair hearing. Where Simon laid a cautious scholarly foundation, Peyrère suddenly challenged immemorial beliefs, and failed accordingly.

11. Such an evolution could not occur in France without affecting the neighbouring civilization of Holland. We have seen Dutch life

[1] *Præadamitæ, sive Exercitatio super versibus 12, 13, 14 cap. 5, Epist. D. Pauli ad Romanos, Quibus inducuntur Primi Homines ante Adamum conditi.* The notion of a pre-Adamite human race, as we saw, had been held by Bruno. (Above, p. 46.)

[2] My copies of the *Præadamitæ* and *Systema* bear no place-imprint, but simply "Anno Salutis MDCLV." Both books seem to have been at once reprinted in 12mo.

[3] Bayle, *Dictionnaire*, art. PEYRERE. A correspondent of Bayle's concludes his account of "le Préadamite" thus: "Le Pereire étoit le meilleur homme du monde, le plus doux, et qui tranquillement croyoit fort peu de chose." There is a satirical account of him in the *Lettres de Gui Patin*, April 5, 1658 (No. 454, ed. Reveillé-Parise, 1846, iii, 83), cited by Bayle.

[4] See the account of his book by Mr. Lecky, *Rationalism in Europe*, i, 295-97. Rejecting as he did the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, he ranks with Hobbes and Spinoza among the pioneers of true criticism. Indeed, as his book seems to have been in MS. in 1645, he may precede Hobbes. Patin had heard of Peyrère's *Præadamitæ* as ready for printing in 1643. Let. 169, ed. cited, i, 297.

at the beginning of the seventeenth century full of Protestant fanaticism and sectarian strife; and in the time of Descartes these elements, especially on the Calvinist side, were strong enough virtually to drive him out of Holland (1647) after nineteen years' residence.[1] He had, however, made disciples; and his doctrine bore fruit, finding doubtless some old soil ready. Thus in 1666 one of his disciples, the Amsterdam physician Louis Meyer, published a work entitled *Philosophia Sacrae Scripturae Interpres*,[2] in which, after formally affirming that the Scripture is the infallible Word of God, he proceeds to argue that the interpretation of the Word must be made by the human reason, and accordingly sets aside all meanings which are irreconcilable therewith, reducing them to allegories or tropes. Apart from this, there is somewhat strong evidence that in Holland in the second half of the century Cartesianism was in large part identified with a widespread movement of rationalism, of a sufficiently pronounced kind. Peter von Mastricht, Professor of Theology at Utrecht, published in 1677 a Latin treatise, *Novitatum Cartesianarum Gangræna*, in which he made out a list of fifty-six anti-Christian propositions maintained by Cartesians. Among them are these: That the divine essence, also that of angels, and that of the soul, consists only in Cogitation; That philosophy is not subservient to divinity, and is no less certain and no less revealed; That in things natural, moral, and practical, and also in matters of faith, the Scripture speaks according to the erroneous notions of the vulgar; That the mystery of the Trinity may be demonstrated by natural reason; That the first chaos was able of itself to produce all things material; That the world has a soul; and that it may be infinite in extent.[3] The theologian was thus visibly justified in maintaining that the "novelties" of Cartesianism outwent by a long way those of Arminianism.[4] It had in fact established a new point of view; seeing that Arminius had claimed for theology all the supremacy ever accorded to it in the Church.[5]

12. As Meyer was one of the most intimate friends of Spinoza, being with him at death, and became the editor of his posthumous works, it can hardly be doubted that his treatise, which preceded Spinoza's *Tractatus* by four years, influenced the great Jew, who speedily eclipsed him.[6] SPINOZA, however (1632–1677), was first led

1 Kuno Fischer, *Descartes and his School*, pp. 254–68.
2 Colerus (*i.e.*, Köhler), *Vie de Spinoza*, in Gfrörer's ed. of the *Opera*, pp. xlv–xlvii.
3 Cited by George Sinclar in pref. to *Satan's Invisible World Discovered*, 1685, rep. 1871. I have been unable to meet with a copy of Mastricht's book.
4 "Novitates Cartesianæ multis parasangas superunt Arminianas."
5 Nichols, *Works of Arminius*, 1824, i, 257 *b* (paging partly duplicated).
6 Cp. Bouillier, i, 293–94.

to rationalize by his Amsterdam friend and teacher, Van den Ende, a scientific materialist, hostile to all religion;[1] and it was while under his influence that he was excommunicated by his father's synagogue. From the first, apparently, Spinoza's thought was shaped partly by the medieval Hebrew philosophy[2] (which, as we have seen, combined Aristotelean and Saracen influences), partly by the teaching of Bruno, though he modified and corrected that at various points.[3] Later he was deeply influenced by Descartes, whom he specially expounded for a pupil in a tractate.[4] Here he endorses Descartes's doctrine of freewill, which he was later to repudiate and overthrow. But he drew from Descartes his retained principle that evil is not a real existence. In a much less degree he was influenced by Bacon, whose psychology he ultimately condemned; but from Hobbes he took not only his rationalistic attitude towards "revelation," but his doctrine of ecclesiastical subordination.[5] Finally evolving his own conceptions, he produced a philosophic system which was destined to affect all European thought, remaining the while quietly occupied with the handicraft of lens-grinding by which he earned his livelihood. The Grand Pensionary of the Netherlands, John de Witt, seems to have been in full sympathy with the young heretic, on whom he conferred a small pension before he had published anything save his Cartesian *Principia* (1663).

The much more daring and powerful *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (1670[6]) was promptly condemned by a Dutch clerical synod, along with Hobbes's *Leviathan*, which it greatly surpassed in the matter of criticism of the scriptural text. It was the most stringent censure of supernaturalism that had thus far appeared in any modern language; and its preface is an even more mordant attack on popular religion and clericalism than the main body of the work. What seems to-day an odd compromise—the reservation of supra-rational authority for revelation, alongside of unqualified claims for the freedom of reason[7]—was but an adaptation of the old scholastic formula of "twofold truth," and was perhaps at the time the possible maximum of open rationalism in regard to the current creed, since both Bacon and Locke, as we have seen, were fain to resort to it. As revealed in his letters, Spinoza in almost all things stood at

[1] Colerus, *Vie de Spinoza*, in Gfrörer's ed. of *Opera*, p. xxv; Martineau, *Study of Spinoza*, 1882, pp. 20–22; Pollock, *Spinoza*, 2nd ed. 1899, pp. 10–14.

[2] As set forth by Joel, *Beiträge zur Gesch. der Philos.*, Breslau, 1876. See citations in Land's note to his lecture in *Spinoza: Four Essays*, 1882, pp. 51–53.

[3] Land, "In Memory of Spinoza," in *Spinoza: Four Essays*, pp. 57–58; Sigwart, as there cited; Pollock, *Spinoza*, p. 12. Cp. however, Martineau, p. 101, *note*.

[4] *Renati Des Cartes Princip. Philos. more geometrico demonstratæ*, 1663.

[5] Cp. Martineau, pp. 46, 57.

[6] Reprinted in 1674, without place-name, and with the imprint of an imaginary Hamburg publisher.

[7] *Tractatus*, c. 15.

the point of view of the cultivated rationalism of two centuries later. He believed in a historical Jesus, rejecting the Resurrection;[1] disbelieved in ghosts and spirits;[2] rejected miracles;[3] and refused to think of God as ever angry;[4] avowing that he could not understand the Scriptures, and had been able to learn nothing from them as to God's attributes.[5] The *Tractatus* could not go so far; but it went far enough to horrify many who counted themselves latitudinarian. It was only in Holland that so aggressive a criticism of Christian faith and practice could then appear; and even there neither publisher nor author dared avow himself. Spinoza even vetoed a translation into Dutch, foreseeing that such a book would be placed under an interdict.[6] It was as much an appeal for freedom of thought (*libertas philosophandi*) as a demonstration of rational truth; and Spinoza dexterously pointed (c. 20) to the social effects of the religious liberty already enjoyed in Amsterdam as a reason for carrying liberty further. There can be no question that it powerfully furthered alike the deistic and the Unitarian movements in England from the year of its appearance; and, though the States-General felt bound formally to prohibit it on the issue of the second edition in 1674, its effect in Holland was probably as great as elsewhere: at least there seems to have gone on there from this time a rapid modification of the old orthodoxy.

Still more profound, probably, was the effect of the posthumous *Ethica* (1677), which he had been prevented from publishing in his lifetime,[7] and which not only propounded in parts an absolute pantheism (=atheism[8]), but definitely grounded ethics in human nature. If more were needed to arouse theological rage, it was to be found in the repeated and insistent criticism of the moral and mental perversity of the defenders of the faith[9]—a position not indeed quite consistent with the primary teaching of the treatise on the subject of Will, of which it denies the entity in the ordinary sense. Spinoza was here reverting to the practical attitude of Bacon, which, under a partial misconception, he had repudiated; and he did not formally solve the contradiction. His purpose was to confute the ordinary orthodox dogma that unbelief is wilful sin;

1 Ep. xxiv, to Oldenburg.
2 Epp. lviii, lx, to Boxel.
3 Ep. xxiii, to Oldenburg.
4 Ep. xxiv.
5 Ep. xxxiv, to W. van Bleyenberg.
6 Ep. xlvii, to Jellis, Feb. 1671.
7 Ep. xix, 1675, to Oldenburg.
8 "Spinozism is atheistic, and has no valid ground for retaining the word 'God'" (Martineau, p. 349). This estimate is systematically made good by Prof. E. E. Powell of Miami University in his *Spinoza and Religion* (1906). See in particular ch. v. The summing-up is that "the right name for Spinoza's philosophy is Atheistic Monism" (pp. 339–40).
9 *Ethica*, pt. i, App.; pt. ii, *end*; pt. v, prop. 41, schol. Cp. the Letters, *passim*.

and to retort the charge without reconciling it with the thesis was to impair the philosophic argument.[1] It was not on that score, however, that it was resented, but as an unpardonable attack on orthodoxy, not to be atoned for by any words about the spirit of Christ.[2] The discussion went deep and far. A reply to the *Tractatus* which appeared in 1674, by an Utrecht professor (then dead), is spoken of by Spinoza with contempt;[3] but abler discussion followed, though the assailants mostly fell foul of each other. Franz Cuper or Kuyper of Amsterdam, who in 1676 published an *Arcana Atheismi Revelata*, professedly refuting Spinoza's *Tractatus*, was charged with writing in bad faith and with being on Spinoza's side —an accusation which he promptly retorted on other critics, apparently with justice.[4]

> The able treatise of Prof. E. E. Powell on *Spinoza and Religion* is open to demur at one point—its reiterated dictum that Spinoza's character was marred by "lack of moral courage" (p. 44). This expression is later in a measure retreated from: after "his habitual attitude of timid caution," we have: "Spinoza's timidity, or, if you will, his peaceable disposition." If the last-cited concession is to stand, the other phrases should be withdrawn. Moral courage, like every other human attribute, is to be estimated comparatively; and the test-question here is: Did any other writer in Spinoza's day venture further than he? Moral courage is not identical with the fanaticism which invites destruction; fanaticism supplies a motive which dispenses with courage, though it operates as courage might. But refusal to challenge destruction gratuitously does not imply lack of courage, though of course it may be thereby motived. A quite brave man, it has been noted, will quietly shun a gratuitous risk where one who is "afraid of being afraid" may face it. When all is said, Spinoza was one of the most daring writers of his day; and his ethic made it no more a dereliction of duty for him to avoid provoking arrest and capital punishment than it is for either a Protestant or a rationalist to refrain from courting death by openly defying Catholic beliefs before a Catholic mob in Spain. It is easy for any of us to-day to be far more explicit than Spinoza was. It is doubtful whether any of us, if we had lived in his day and were capable of going as far in heresy, would

[1] The solution is, of course, that the attitude of the will in the forming of opinion may or may not be passionally perverse, in the sense of being inconsistent. To show that it is inconsistent *may* be a means of enlightening it; and an aspersion to that effect *may* be medicinal. Spinoza might truly have said that passional perversity was at least as common on the orthodox side as on the other. In any case, he quashes his own criticism of Bacon. Cp. the author's essay on Spinoza in *Pioneer Humanists*.

[2] Pt. iv, prop. 68, schol.

[3] Ep. 1; 2 June, 1674.

[4] Colerus, as cited, p. liv. Cuper appears to have been genuinely anti-Spinozist, while his opponent, Breitburg, or Bredenburg, of Rotterdam, *was* a Spinozist. Both were members of the society of "Collegiants," a body of non-dogmatic Christians, which for a time was broken up through their dissensions. Mosheim, 17 Cent. sec. ii, pt. ii, ch. vii, § 2, and *note*.

have run such risks as he did in publishing the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*. For those who have lived much in his society, it should be difficult to doubt that, if allowed, he would have dared death on the night of the mob-murder of the De Witts. The formerly suppressed proof of his very plain speaking on the subject of prayer, and his indications of aversion to the practice of grace before meals (Powell, pp. 323–25) show lack even of prudence on his part. Prof. Powell is certainly entitled to censure those recent writers who have wilfully kept up a mystification as to Spinoza's religiosity; but *their* lack of courage or candour does not justify an imputation of the same kind upon him. That Spinoza was "no saint" (Powell, p. 43) is true in the remote sense that he was not incapable of anger. But it would be hard to find a Christian who would compare with him in general nobility of character. The proposition that he was not "in *any* sense religious" (*id. ib.*) seems open to verbal challenge.

13. The appearance in 1678 of a Dutch treatise "against all sorts of atheists,"[1] and in 1681, at Amsterdam, of an attack in French on Spinoza's Scriptural criticism,[2] points to a movement outside of the clerical and scholarly class. All along, indeed, the atmosphere of the Arminian or "Remonstrant" School in Holland must have been fairly liberal.[3] Already in 1685 Locke's friend Le Clerc had taken up the position of Hobbes and Spinoza and Simon on the Pentateuch in his *Sentimens de quelques théologiens de Hollande* (translated into English and published in 1690 as "Five Letters Concerning the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures").[4] And although Le Clerc always remained something of a Scripturalist, and refused to go the way of Spinoza, he had courage enough to revive an ancient heresy by urging, in his commentary on the fourth Gospel (1701), that "the Logos" should be rendered "Reason"—an idea which he probably derived from the Unitarian Zwicker without realizing how far it could take him. His ultimate recantation, on the subject of the authorship of the Pentateuch, served only to weaken his credit with freethinkers, and came too late to arrest the intellectual movement which he had forwarded.

A rationalizing spirit had now begun to spread widely in Holland; and within twenty years of Spinoza's death there had arisen a Dutch

[1] *Theologisch, Philosophisch, en Historisch process voor God, tegen allerley Atheisten.* By Francis Ridder, Rotterdam, 1678.

[2] *L'Impiété Convaincu,* "par Pierre Yvon," Amsterdam, 1681. Really by the Sieur Noël Aubert de Versé. This appears to have been reprinted in 1685 under the title *L'Impie convaincu, ou Dissertation contre Spinosa, ou l'on réfute les fondemens de son athéisme.*

[3] See Fox Bourne's *Life of Locke*, ii, 282–83, as to Locke's friendly relations with the Remonstrants in 1683–89.

[4] See the summary of his argument by Alexandre Westphal, *Les Sources du Pentateuque*, 1888, i, 78 *sq.*

sect, led by Pontiaan van Hattem, a pastor at Philipsland, which blended Spinozism with evangelicalism in such a way as to incur the anathema of the Church.[1] In the time of the English Civil War the fear of the opponents of the new multitude of sects was that England should become "another Amsterdam."[2] This very multiplicity tended to promote doubt; and in 1713 we find Anthony Collins[3] pointing to Holland as a country where freedom to think has undermined superstition to a remarkable degree. During his stay, in the previous generation, Locke had found a measure of liberal theology, in harmony with his own; but in those days downright heresy was still dangerous. DEURHOFF (d. 1717), who translated Descartes and was accused of Spinozism, though he strongly attacked it,[4] had at one time to fly Holland, though by his writings he founded a pantheistic sect known as Deurhovians; and BALTHASAR BEKKER, a Cartesian, persecuted first for Socinianism, incurred so much odium by publishing in 1691 a treatise denying the reality of witchcraft that he had to give up his office as a preacher.

Cp. art. in *Biographie Universelle*, and Mosheim, 17 Cent. pt. ii, ch. ii, § 35, and notes in Reid's ed. Bekker was not the first to combat demonology on scriptural grounds; Arnold Geulincx, of Leyden, and the French Protestant refugee Daillon having less confidently put the view before him, the latter in his *Daimonologia*, 1687 (trans. in English, 1723), and the former in his system of ethics. Gassendi, as we saw, had notably discredited witchcraft a generation earlier; Reginald Scot had impugned its actuality in 1584; and Wier, still earlier, in 1583. And even before the Reformation the learned King Christian II of Denmark (deposed 1523) had vetoed witch-burning in his dominions. (Allen, *Hist. de Danemark*, French tr. 1878, i, 281.) As Scot's *Discoverie* had been translated into Dutch in 1609, Bekker probably had a lead from him. Glanvill's *Blow at Modern Sadducism* (1688), reproduced in *Sadducismus Triumphatus*, undertakes to answer some objections of the kind later urged by Bekker; and the discussion was practically international. Bekker's treatise, entitled *De Betooverte Wereld*, was translated into English—first in 1695, from the French, under the title *The World Bewitched* (only 1 vol. published), and again in 1700 as *The World turned upside down*. In the French translation, *Le Monde Enchanté* (4 tom. 1694), it had a great vogue. A refutation was published in English in *An Historical Treatise of Spirits*, by J. Beaumont, in 1705. It is noteworthy

[1] Mosheim, Reid's ed. p. 836; Martineau, pp. 327–28. The first MS. of the treatise of Spinoza, *De Deo et Homine*, found and published in the nineteenth century, bore a note which showed it to have been used by a sect of Christian Spinozists. See Janet's ed. 1878, p. 3. They altered the text, putting "faith" for "opinion." *Id.* p. 53, *notes*.

[2] Edwards, *Gangræna*, as before cited.

[3] *Discourse of Freethinking*, p. 28.

[4] Colerus, as cited, p. lviii.

that Bekker was included as one of "four modern sages (*vier neuer Welt-Weisen*)" with Descartes, Hobbes, and Spinoza, in a German folio tractate (hostile) of 1702.

14. No greater service was rendered in that age to the spread of rational views than that embodied in the great *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique*[1] of PIERRE BAYLE (1647–1706), who, born in France, but driven out by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, spent the best part of his life and did his main work at Rotterdam. Persecuted there for his freethinking, to the extent of having to give up his professorship, he yet produced a virtual encyclopedia for freethinkers in his incomparable Dictionary, baffling hostility by the Pyrrhonian impartiality with which he handled all religious questions. In his youth, when sent by his Protestant father to study at Toulouse, he had been temporarily converted, as was the young Gibbon later, to Catholicism;[2] and the retrospect of that experience seems in Bayle's case, as in Gibbon's, to have been a permanent motive to practical skepticism.[3] But, again, in the one case as in the other, skepticism was fortified by abundant knowledge. Bayle had read everything and mastered every controversy, and was thereby the better able to seem to have no convictions of his own. But even apart from the notable defence of the character of atheists dropped by him in the famous *Pensées diverses sur la Comète* (1682), and in the *Éclaircissements* in which he defended it, it is abundantly evident that he was an unbeliever. The only alternative view is that he was strictly or philosophically a skeptic, reaching no conclusions for himself; but this is excluded by the whole management of his expositions.[4] It is recorded that it was his vehement description of himself as a Protestant "in the full force of the term," accompanied with a quotation from Lucretius, that set the clerical diplomatist Polignac upon re-reading the Roman atheist and writing his poem *Anti-Lucretius*.[5] Bayle's ostensible Pyrrhonism was simply the tactic forced on him by his conditions; and it was the positive unbelievers who specially delighted in his volumes. He laid down no cosmic doctrines, but he illuminated all; and his air of repudiating

1 First ed. Rotterdam, 2 vols. folio, 1696.

2 Albert Cazes, *Pierre Bayle, sa vie, ses idées, son influence, son œuvre*, 1905, pp. 6, 7.

3 A movement of skepticism had probably been first set up in the young Bayle by Montaigne, who was one of his favourite authors before his conversion (Cazes, p. 5). Montaigne, it will be remembered, had been a fanatic in his youth. Thus three typical skeptics of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries had known what it was to be Catholic believers.

4 Cp. the essay on *The Skepticism of Bayle* in Sir J. F. Stephen's *Horæ Sabbaticæ*, vol. iii, and the remarks of Perrens, *Les Libertins*, pp. 331–37.

5 *Éloge de M. le Cardinal Polignac* prefixed to Bougainville's translation, *L'Anti-Lucrèce*, 1767, i, 141. Bayle's quoted words are: "Oui, monsieur, je suis bon Protestant, et dans toute la force du mot; car au fond de mon âme je proteste contre tout ce qui se dit et tout ce qui se fait."

such views as Spinoza's had the effect rather of forcing Spinozists to leave neutral ground than of rehabilitating orthodoxy.

On one theme he spoke without any semblance of doubt. Above all men who had yet written he is the champion of toleration.[1] At a time when in England the school of Locke still held that atheism must not be tolerated, he would accept no such position, insisting that error as such is not culpable, and that, save in the case of a sect positively inciting to violence and disorder, all punishment of opinion is irrational and unjust.[2] On this theme, moved by the memory of his own life of exile and the atrocious persecution of the Protestants of France, he lost his normal imperturbability, as in his Letter to an Abbé (if it be really his), entitled *Ce que c'est que la France toute catholique sous le règne de Louis le Grand*, in which a controlled passion of accusation makes every sentence bite like an acid, leaving a mark that no dialectic can efface. But it was not only from Catholicism that he suffered, and not only to Catholics that his message was addressed. One of his most malignant enemies was the Protestant Jurieu, who it was that succeeded in having him deprived of his chair of philosophy and history at Rotterdam (1693) on the score of the freethinking of his *Pensées sur la Comète*. This wrong cast a shadow over his life, reducing him to financial straits in which he had to curtail greatly the plan of his Dictionary. Further, it moved him to some inconsistent censure of the political writings of French Protestant refugees[3]—Jurieu being the reputed author of a violent attack on the rule of Louis XIV, under the title *Les Soupirs de la France esclave qui aspire après la liberté* (1689).[4] Yet again, the malicious Jurieu induced the Consistory of Rotterdam to censure the Dictionary on the score of the tone and tendency of the article "David" and the renewed vindications of atheists.

But nothing could turn Bayle from his loyalty to reason and toleration; and the malice of the bigots could not deprive him of his literary vogue, which was in the ratio of his unparalleled industry. As a mere writer he is admirable: save in point of sheer wit, of which, however, he has not a little, he is to this day as readable as Voltaire. By force of unfailing lucidity, wisdom, and

[1] Cp. the testimony of Bonet-Maury, *Histoire de la liberté de conscience en France*, 1900, p. 55. Besides the writings above cited, note, in the *Dictionnaire*, art. MAHOMET, § ix; art. CONECTE; art. SIMONIDE, notes H and G; art. SPONDE, note C.

[2] *Commentaire philosophique sur la parabole: Contrains-les d'entrer*, 2e ptie, vi. Cp. the *Critique générale de l'histoire du Calvinisme du Père Maimbourg*, passim.

[3] See pref. to Eng. tr. of Hotman's *Franco-Gallia*, 1711.

[4] Rep. at Amsterdam, 1788, under the title, *Vœux d'un Patriote*. Jurieu's authorship is not certain. Cp. Ch. Nodier, *Mélanges tirés d'une petite bibliothèque*, 1829, p. 357. But it is more likely than the alternative ascription to Le Vassor. The book made such a sensation that the police of Louis XIV destroyed every copy they could find; and in 1772 the Chancelier Maupeou was said to have paid 500 livres for a copy at auction over the Duc d'Orléans.

knowledge, he made the conquest of literary Europe; and fifty years after his death we find the Jesuit Delamare in his (anonymous) apologetic treatise, *La Foi justifiée de tout reproche de contradiction avec la raison* (1761), speaking of him to the deists as "their theologian, their doctor, their oracle."[1] He was indeed no less; and his serene exposure of the historic failure of Christianity was all the more deadly as coming from a master of theological history.

15. Meantime, Spinoza had reinforced the critical movement in France,[2] where decline of belief can be seen proceeding after as before the definite adoption of pietistic courses by the king, under the influence of Madame de Maintenon. Abbadie, writing his *Traité de la verité de la religion chrétienne* at Berlin in 1684, speaks of an "infinity" of prejudiced deists as against the "infinity" of prejudiced believers[3]—evidently thinking of northern Europeans in general; and he strives hard to refute both Hobbes and Spinoza on points of Biblical criticism. In France he could not turn the tide. That radical distrust of religious motives and illumination which can be seen growing up in every country in modern Europe where religion led to war, was bound to be strengthened by the spectacle of the reformed sensualist harrying heresy in his own kingdom in the intervals of his wars with his neighbours. The crowning folly of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes[4] (1685), forcing the flight from France of some three hundred thousand industrious[5] and educated inhabitants for the offence of Protestantism, was as mad a blow to religion as to the State. Less paralysing to economic life than the similar policy of the Church against the Moriscoes in Spain, it is no less striking a proof of the paralysis of practical judgment to which unreasoning faith and systematic ecclesiasticism can lead. Orthodoxy in France was as ecstatic in its praise of the act as had been that of Spain in the case of the expulsion of the Moriscoes. The deed is not to be laid at the single door of the king or of any of his advisers, male or female: the act which deprived France of a vast host of her soundest citizens was applauded by

[1] Ed. 1766, p. 7.

[2] The *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* had been translated into French in 1678 by Saint-Glain, a Protestant, who gave it no fewer than three other titles in succession to evade prosecution. (Note to Colerus in Gfrörer's ed. of Spinoza, p. xlix.) In addition to the work of Aubert de Versé, above mentioned, replies were published by Simon, De la Motte (minister of the Savoy Chapel, London), Lami, a Benedictine, and others. Their spirit may be divined from Lami's title, *Nouvel athéisme renversé*, 1706.

[3] Tom. I, § ii, ch. ix (ed. 1864, i, 134, 177).

[4] The destruction of Protestant liberties was not the work of the single Act of Revocation. It had begun in detail as early as 1663. From the withholding of court favour it proceeded to subsidies for conversions, and thence to a graduated series of invasions of Protestant rights, so that the formal Revocation was only the violent consummation of a process. See the recital in Bonet-Maury, *Histoire de la liberté de conscience en France*, 1900, pp. 46–52.

[5] As to the loss to French industry see Bonet-Maury, as cited, p. 59, and refs.

nearly all cultured Catholicism.[1] Not merely the bishops, Bossuet and Fénelon[2] and Masillon, but the Jansenist Arnauld; not merely the female devotees, Mademoiselle de Scudéry and Madame Deshoulières, but Racine, La Bruyère, and the senile la Fontaine—all extolled the senseless deed. The not over-pious Madame de Sévigné was delighted with the "dragonnades," declaring that "nothing could be finer: no king has done or will do anything more memorable"; the still less mystical Bussy, author of the *Histoire amoureuse des Gaules*, was moved to pious exultation; and the dying Chancelier le Tellier, on signing the edict of revocation, repeated the legendary cry of Simeon, *Nunc dimitte servum tuum, Domine!* To this pass had the Catholic creed and discipline brought the mind of France. Only the men of affairs, nourished upon realities—the Vaubans, Saint Simons, and Catinats—realized the insanity of the action, which Colbert (d. 1683) would never have allowed to come to birth.

The triumphers, doubtless, did not contemplate the expatriation of the myriads of Protestants who escaped over the frontiers in the closing years of the century in spite of all the efforts of the royal police, "carrying with them," as a later French historian writes, "our arts, the secrets of our manufactures, and their hatred of the king." The Catholics, as deep in civics as in science, thought only of the humiliation and subjection of the heretics—doubtless feeling that they were getting a revenge against Protestantism for the Test Act and the atrocities of the Popish Plot mania in England. The blow recoiled on their country. Within a generation, their children were enduring the agonies of utter defeat at the hands of a coalition of Protestant nations every one of which had been strengthened by the piously exiled sons of France; and in the midst of their mortal struggle the revolted Protestants of the Cévennes so furiously assailed from the rear that the drain upon the king's forces precipitated the loss of their hold on Germany.

For every Protestant who crossed the frontiers between 1685 and 1700, perhaps, a Catholic neared or crossed the line between indifferentism and active doubt. The steady advance of science all the while infallibly undermined faith; and hardly was the bolt launched against the Protestants when new sapping and mining was going on. FONTENELLE (1657–1757), whose *Conversations on the Plurality of Worlds* (1686) popularized for the elegant world the new cosmology,

[1] See Duruy, *Hist. de la France*, ii, 253; Bonet-Maury, as cited, pp. 53–66.
[2] As to whose attitude at this crisis see O. Douen, *L'Intolérance de Fénelon*, 1880.

cannot but have undermined dogmatic faith in some directions; above all by his graceful and skilful *Histoire des Oracles* (also 1686), where "the argumentation passes beyond the thesis advanced. All that he says of oracles could be said of miracles."[1] The Jesuits found the book essentially "impious"; and a French culture-historian sees in it "the first attack which directs the scientific spirit against the foundations of Christianity. All the purely philosophic arguments with which religion has been assailed are in principle in the work of Fontenelle."[2] In his abstract thinking he was no less radical, and his *Traité de la Liberté*[3] established so well the determinist position that it was decisively held by the majority of the French freethinkers who followed. Living to his hundredth year, he could join hands with the freethought of Gassendi and Voltaire,[4] Descartes and Diderot. Yet we shall find him later, in his official capacity of censor of literature, refusing to pass heretical books, on principles that would have vetoed his own. He is in fact a type of the freethought of the age of Louis XIV—Epicurean in the common sense, unheroic, resolute only to evade penalties, guiltless of over-zeal. Not in that age could men generate an enthusiasm for truth.

16. Of the new Epicureans, the most famous in his day was SAINT-EVREMOND,[5] who, exiled from France for his politics, maintained both in London and in Paris, by his writings, a leadership in polite letters. In England he greatly influenced young men like Bolingbroke; and a translation (attributed to Dryden) of one of his writings seems to have given Bishop Butler the provocation to the first and weakest chapter of his *Analogy*.[6] As to his skepticism there was no doubt in his own day; and his compliments to Christianity are much on a par with those paid later by the equally conforming and unbelieving Shaftesbury, whom he also anticipated in his persuasive advocacy of toleration.[7] REGNARD, the dramatist, had a similar private repute as an "Epicurean." And even among the nominally orthodox writers of the time in France a subtle skepticism touches nearly all opinion. La Bruyère is almost the only lay classic of the period who is pronouncedly religious; and his essay on the freethinkers,[8] against whom his reasoning is so forcibly

[1] Lanson, *Hist. de la litt. française*, p. 627. [2] *Id ib.* Cp. Demogeot, p. 468.
[3] Not printed till 1743, in the *Nouvelles libertés de penser*; and still read in MS. by Grimm in 1754. Fontenelle was also credited with a heretical letter on the resurrection, and an essay on the Infinite, pointing to disbelief. It should be noted, however, that he stands for deism in his essay, *De l'existence de Dieu*, which is a guarded application of the design argument against what was then assumed to be the only alternative—the "fortuitous concourse of atoms."
[4] But Voltaire and he were not at one. He is the "nain de Saturne" in *Micromégas*.
[5] B. 1613; d. 1703. A man who lived to ninety can have been no great debauchee.
[6] Cp. *Dynamics of Religion*, p. 172.
[7] Cp. Gidel, *Étude* prefixed to *Œuvres Choisies de Saint-Evremond*, ed. Garnier, pp. 64-69.
[8] *Caractères* (1687), ch. xvi: *Les Esprits Forts*.

feeble, testifies to their numbers and to the stress of debate set up by them. Even he, too, writes as a deist against atheists, hardly as a believing Christian. If he were a believer he certainly found no comfort in his faith: whatever were his capacity for good feeling, no great writer of his age betrays such bitterness of spirit, such suffering from the brutalities of life, such utter disillusionment, such unfaith in men. And a certain doubt is cast upon all his professions of opinion by the sombre avowal: "A man born a Christian and a Frenchman finds himself constrained[1] in satire: the great subjects are forbidden him: he takes them up at times, and then turns aside to little things, which he elevates by his.....genius and his style."[2]

M. Lanson remarks that "we must not let ourselves be abused by the last chapter [*Des esprits forts*], a collection of philosophic reflections and reasonings, where La Bruyère mingles Plato, Descartes, and Pascal in a vague Christian spiritualism. This chapter, evidently sincere, but without individuality, and containing only the reflex of the thoughts of others, is not a conclusion to which the whole work conducts. It marks, on the contrary, the lack of conclusion and of general views. What is more, with the chapter *On the Sovereign*, placed in the middle of the volume, it is destined to disarm the temporal and spiritual powers, to serve as passport for the independent freedom of observation in the rest of the *Caractères*" (p. 599).

On this it may be remarked that the essay in question is not so much Christian as theistic; but the suggestion as to the object is plausible. Taine (*Essais de critique et d'histoire*, ed. 1901) first remarks (p. 11) on the "christianisme" of the essay, and then decides (p. 12) that "he merely exposes in brief and imperious style the reasonings of the school of Descartes." It should be noted, however, that in this essay La Bruyère does not scruple to write: "If all religion is a respectful fear of God, what is to be thought of those who dare to wound him in his most living image, which is the sovereign?" (§ 27 in ed. Walckenaer, p. 578. Pascal holds the same tone. *Vie*, par Madame Perier.) This appears first in the fourth edition; and many other passages were inserted in that and later issues: the whole is an inharmonious mosaic.

Concerning La Bruyère, the truth would seem to be that the inconsequences in the structure of his essays were symptomatic of variability in his moods and opinions. Taine and Lanson are struck by the premonitions of the revolution in his famous picture of the peasants, and other passages; and the latter remarks (p. 603) that "the points touched by La Bruyère are precisely those where the writers of the next age undermined

[1] "Is embarrassed" in the first edition.
[2] *Des ouvrages de l'esprit*, near end. § 65 in ed. Walckenaer, p. 176.

the old order: La Bruyère is already *philosophe* in the sense which Voltaire and Diderot gave to that term." But we cannot be sure that the plunges into convention were not real swervings of a vacillating spirit. It is difficult otherwise to explain his recorded approbation of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

The *Dialogues sur le Quiétisme*, published posthumously under his name (1699), appear to be spurious. This was emphatically asserted by contemporaries (*Sentiments critiques sur les Caractères de M. de la Bruyère*, 1701, p. 447; *Apologie de M. de la Bruyère*, 1701, p. 357, both cited by Walckenaer) who on other points were in opposition. Baron Walckenaer (*Étude*, ed. cited, p. 76 *sq.*) pronounces that they were the work of Elliès du Pin, a doctor of the Sorbonne, and gives good reasons for the attribution. The Abbé d'Olivet in his *Histoire de l'Académie française* declares that La Bruyère only drafted them, and that du Pin edited them; but the internal evidence is against their containing anything of La Bruyère's draught. They are indeed so feeble that no admirer cares to accept them as his. (Cp. note to Suard's *Notice sur la personne et les écrits de la Bruyère*, in Didot ed. 1865, p. 20.) Written against Madame Guyon, they were not worth his while.

If the apologetics of Huet and Pascal, Bossuet and Fénelon, had any influence on the rationalistic spirit, it was but in the direction of making it more circumspect, never of driving it out. It is significant that whereas in the year of the issue of the *Demonstratio* the Duchesse d'Orléans could write that "every young man either is or affects to be an atheist," Le Vassor wrote in 1688: "People talk only of *reason*, of *good taste*, of *force of mind*, of the advantage of those who can raise themselves above the *prejudices* of education and of the society in which one is born. Pyrrhonism is the fashion in many things: men say that rectitude of mind consists in 'not believing lightly' and in being 'ready to doubt.'"[1] Pascal and Huet between them had only multiplied doubters. On both lines, obviously, freethought was the gainer; and in a Jesuit treatise, *Le Monde condamné par luymesme*, published in 1695, the *Préface contre l'incrédulité des libertins* sets out with the avowal that "to draw the condemnation of the world out of its own mouth, it is necessary to attack first the incredulity of the unbelievers (*libertins*), who compose the main part of it, and who under some appearance of Christianity conceal a mind either Judaic [read *deistic*] or pagan." Such was France to a religious eye at the height of the Catholic triumph over Protestantism. The statement that the *libertins*

[1] M. Le Vassor, *De la véritable religion*, 1688, préf. Le Vassor speaks in the same preface of "this multitude of *libertins* and of unbelievers which now terrifies us." His book seeks to vindicate the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, inspiration, prophecies, and miracles, against Spinoza, Le Clerc, and others.

formed the majority of "the world" is of course a furious extravagance. But there must have been a good deal of unbelief to have moved a priest to such an explosion. And the unbelief must have been as much a product of revulsion from religious savagery as a result of direct critical impulse, for there was as yet no circulation of positively freethinking literature. For a time, indeed, there was a general falling away in French intellectual prestige,[1] the result, not of the mere "protective spirit" in literature, as is sometimes argued, but of the immense diversion of national energy under Louis XIV to militarism;[2] and the freethinkers lost some of the confidence as well as some of the competence they had exhibited in the days of Molière.[3] There had been too little solid thinking done to preclude a reaction when the king, led by Madame de Maintenon, went about to atone for his debaucheries by an old age of piety. "The king had been put in such fear of hell that he believed that all who had not been instructed by the Jesuits were damned. To ruin anyone it was necessary only to say, 'He is a Huguenot, or a Jansenist,' and the thing was done."[4] In this state of things there spread in France the revived doctrine or temper of Quietism, set up by the Spanish priest, Miguel de Molinos (1640–1697), whose *Spiritual Guide*, published in Spanish in 1675, appeared in 1681 in Italian at Rome, where he was a highly influential confessor. It was soon translated into Latin, French, and Dutch. In 1685 he was cited before the Inquisition; in 1687 the book was condemned to be burned, and he was compelled to retract sixty-eight propositions declared to be heretical; whereafter, nonetheless, he was imprisoned till his death in 1696. In France, whence the attack on him had begun, his teaching made many converts, notably Madame Guyon, and may be said to have created a measure of religious revival. But when Fénelon took it up (1697), modifying the terminology of Molinos to evade the official condemnation, he was bitterly attacked by Bossuet as putting forth doctrine incompatible with Christianity; the prelates fought for two years; and finally the Pope condemned Fénelon's book, whereupon he submitted, limiting his polemic to attacks on the Jansenists. Thus the gloomy orthodoxy of the court and the mysticism of the new school alike failed to affect the general intelligence; there was no real building up of belief; and the forward movement at length recommenced.

[1] Cp. Huet, *Huetiana*, § 1.

[2] The question is discussed in the author's *Buckle and his Critics*, pp. 324–42, and ed. of Buckle's *Introduction*. Buckle's view, however, was held by Huet, *Huetiana*, § 73.

[3] Cp. Perrens, pp. 310–14.

[4] Letter of the Duchesse d'Orléans, cited by Rocquain, *L'Esprit révolutionnaire avant la révolution*, 1878, p. 3, *note*.

Chapter XVI

BRITISH FREETHOUGHT IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

§ 1

It appears from our survey that the "deistic movement," commonly assigned to the eighteenth century, had been abundantly prepared for in the seventeenth, which, in turn, was but developing ideas current in the sixteenth. When, in 1696, John Toland published his *Christianity Not Mysterious*, the sensation it made was due not so much to any unheard-of boldness in its thought as to the simple fact that deistic ideas had thus found their way into print.[1] So far the deistic position was explicitly represented in English literature only by the works of Herbert, Hobbes, and Blount; and of these only the first (who wrote in Latin) and the third had put the case at any length. Against the deists or atheists of the school of Hobbes, and the Scriptural Unitarians who thought with Newton and Locke, there stood arrayed the great mass of orthodox intolerance which clamoured for the violent suppression of every sort of "infidelity." It was this feeling, of which the army of ignorant rural clergy were the spokesmen, that found vent in the Blasphemy Act of 1697. The new literary growth dating from the time of Toland is the evidence of the richness of the rationalistic soil already created. Thinking men craved a new atmosphere. Locke's *Reasonableness of Christianity* is an unsuccessful compromise: Toland's book begins a new propagandist era.

Toland's treatise,[2] heretical as it was, professed to be a defence of the faith, and avowedly founded on Locke's anonymous *Reasonableness of Christianity*, its young author being on terms of acquaintance with the philosopher.[3] He claimed, in fact, to take for granted "the Divinity of the New Testament," and to "demonstrate the verity of divine revelation against atheists and all enemies of revealed religion," from whom, accordingly, he expected to receive

[1] As Voltaire noted, Toland was persecuted in Ireland for his circumspect and cautious first book, and left unmolested in England when he grew much more aggressive.

[2] First ed. anonymous. Second ed., of same year, gives author's name. Another ed. in 1702.

[3] See *Dynamics of Religion*, p. 129.

no quarter. Brought up, as he declared, "from my cradle, in the grossest superstition and idolatry," he had been divinely led to make use of his own reason; and he assured his Christian readers of his perfect sincerity in "defending the true religion."[1] Twenty years later, his primary positions were hardly to be distinguished from those of ratiocinative champions of the creed, save in respect that he was challenging orthodoxy where they were replying to unbelievers. Toland, however, lacked alike the timidity and the prudence which so safely guided Locke in his latter years; and though his argument was only a logical and outspoken extension of Locke's position, to the end of showing that there was nothing supra-rational in Christianity of Locke's type, it separated him from "respectable" society in England and Ireland for the rest of his life. The book was "presented" by the Grand Juries of Middlesex and Dublin;[2] the dissenters in Dublin being chiefly active in denouncing it—with or without knowledge of its contents;[3] half-a-dozen answers appeared; and when in 1698 Toland produced another, entitled *Amyntor*, showing the infirm foundation of the Christian canon, there was again a speedy crop of replies. Despite the oversights inevitable to such pioneer work, this opens, from the side of freethought, the era of documentary criticism of the New Testament; and in some of his later freethinking books, as the *Nazarenus* (1718) and the *Pantheisticon* (1720), he continues to show himself in advance of his time in "opening new windows" for his mind.[4] The latter work represents in particular the influence of Spinoza, whom he had formerly criticized somewhat forcibly[5] for his failure to recognize that motion is inherent in matter. On that head he lays down[6] the doctrine that "motion is but matter under a certain consideration"—an essentially "materialist" position, deriving from the pre-Socratic Greeks, and incidentally affirmed by Bacon.[7] He was not exactly an industrious student or writer; but he had scholarly knowledge and instinct, and several of his works show close study of Bayle.

As regards his more original views on Christian origins, he is not impressive to the modern reader; but theses which to-day stand for little were in their own day important. Thus in his *Hodegus* (pt. i

[1] Pref. to 2nd ed. pp. vi, viii, xxiv, xxvi.
[2] As late as 1701 a vote for its prosecution was passed in the Lower House of Convocation. Farrar, *Crit. Hist. of Freethought*, p. 180.
[3] Molyneux, in *Familiar Letters of Locke*, etc. p. 228.
[4] No credit for this is given in Sir Leslie Stephen's notice of Toland in *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, i, 101–12. Compare the estimate of Lange, *Gesch. des Materialismus*, i, 272–76 (Eng. tr. i, 324–30). Lange perhaps idealizes his subject somewhat.
[5] In two letters published along with the *Letters to Serena*, 1704.
[6] *Letters to Serena*, etc. 1704, pref.
[7] *De Principiis atque Originibus* (Routledge's 1-vol. ed. pp. 651, 667).

of the *Tetradymus*, 1720) it is elaborately argued that the "pillar of fire by night and of cloud by day" was no miracle, but the regular procedure of guides in deserts, where night marches are the rule; the "cloud" being simply the smoke of the vanguard's fire, which by night flared red. Later criticism decides that the whole narrative of the Exodus is myth. Toland's method, however, was relatively so advanced that it had not been abandoned by theological "rationalists" a century later. Of that movement he must be ranked an energetic pioneer: though he lacked somewhat the strength of character that in his day was peculiarly needed to sustain a freethinker. Much of his later life was spent abroad; and his *Letters to Serena* (1704) show him permitted to discourse to the Queen of Prussia on such topics as the origin and force of prejudice, the history of the doctrine of immortality, and the origin of idolatry. He pays his correspondent the compliment of treating his topics with much learning; and his manner of assuming her own orthodoxy in regard to revelation could have served as a model to Gibbon.[1] But, despite such distinguished patronage, his life was largely passed in poverty, cheerfully endured,[2] with only chronic help from well-to-do sympathizers, such as Shaftesbury, who was not over-sympathetic. When it is noted that down to 1761 there had appeared no fewer than fifty-four answers to his first book,[3] his importance as an intellectual influence may be realized.

A certain amount of evasion was forced upon Toland by the Blasphemy Law of 1697; inferentially, however, he was a thorough deist until he became pantheist; and the discussion over his books showed that views essentially deistic were held even among his antagonists. One, an Irish bishop, got into trouble by setting forth a notion of deity which squared with that of Hobbes.[4] The whole of our present subject, indeed, is much complicated by the distribution of heretical views among the nominally orthodox, and of orthodox views among heretics.[5] Thus the school of Cudworth, zealous against atheism, was less truly theistic than that of Blount,[6]

[1] *Letters to Serena*, pp. 19, 67.

[2] Sir Henry Craik (cited by Temple Scott, Bohn ed. of Swift's Works, iii, 9) speaks of Toland as "a man of utterly worthless character." This is more malignant abuse. Toland is described by Pope in a note to the *Dunciad* (ii, 399) as a spy to Lord Oxford. There could hardly be a worse authority for such a charge.

[3] Gostwick, *German Culture and Christianity*, 1882, p. 26.

[4] Cp. Stephen, as cited, p. 115.

[5] "The Christianity of many writers consisted simply in expressing deist opinions in the old-fashioned phraseology" (Stephen, i, 91).

[6] Cp. Pünjer, *Christ. Philos. of Religion*, i, 289–90; and *Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 94–98. Lord Morley's reference to "the godless deism of the English school" (*Voltaire*, 4th ed. p. 69) is puzzling. Cp. Rosenkranz (*Diderot's Leben und Werke*, 1866, ii, 421) on "den ungöttlichen Gott der Jesuiten and Jansenisten, dies monströse Zerrbild des alten Jehovah, diesen apotheosirten Tyrannen, diesen Moloch." The latter application of the term seems the more plausible.

who, following Hobbes, pointed out that to deny to God a continual personal and providential control of human affairs was to hold to atheism under the name of theism;[1] whereas Cudworth, the champion of theism against the atheists, entangled himself hopelessly[2] in a theory which made deity endow Nature with "plastic" powers and leave it to its own evolution. The position was serenely demolished by Bayle,[3] as against Le Clerc, who sought to defend it; and in England the clerical outcry was so general that Cudworth gave up authorship.[4] Over the same crux, in Ireland, Bishop Browne and Bishop Berkeley accused each other of promoting atheism; and Archbishop King was embroiled in the dispute.[5] On the other hand, the theistic Descartes had laid down a "mechanical" theory of the universe which perfectly comported with atheism, and partly promoted that way of thinking;[6] and a selection from Gassendi's ethical writings, translated into English[7] (1699), wrought in the same direction. The Church itself contained Cartesians and Cudworthians, Socinians and deists.[8] Each group, further, had inner differences as to free-will[9] and Providence; and the theistic schools of Newton, Clarke, and Leibnitz rejected each other's philosophies as well as that of Descartes. Leibnitz complained grimly that Newton and his followers had "a very odd opinion concerning the Work of God," making the universe an imperfect machine, which the deity had frequently to mend; and treating space as an organ by which God perceives things, which are thus regarded as not produced or maintained by him.[10] Newton's principles of explanation, he insisted, were those of the materialists.[11] John Hutchinson, a professor at Cambridge, in his *Treatise of Power, Essential and Mechanical*, also bitterly assailed Newton as a deistical and antiscriptural sophist.[12] Clarke, on the other hand, declared that the philosophy of Leibnitz was "tending to banish God from the

[1] Macaulay's description of Blount as an atheist is therefore doubly unwarranted.
[2] Cp. *Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 94–98.
[3] *Continuation des Pensées Diverses.....à l'occasion de la Comète.....de 1680*, Amsterdam, 1705, i. 91.
[4] Warburton, *Divine Legation*, vol. ii, preface.
[5] Stephen, *English Thought*, i, 114–18.
[6] This, according to John Craig, was Newton's opinion. "The reason of his [Newton's] showing the errors of Cartes's philosophy was because he thought it made on purpose to be the foundation of infidelity." Letter to Conduitt, April 7, 1727, in Brewster's *Memoirs of Newton*, ii, 315. Clarke, in his Answer to Butler's Fifth Letter, expresses a similar view.
[7] "*Three Discourses of Happiness, Virtue, and Liberty*, Collected from the Works of the Learn'd Gassendi by Monsieur Bernier. Translated out of the French, 1699."
[8] Cp. W. Sichel, *Bolingbroke and His Times*, 1901, i, 175.
[9] Sir Leslie Stephen (i, 33) makes the surprising statement that a "dogmatic assertion of free-will became a mark of the whole deist and semi-deist school." On the contrary, Hobbes and Anthony Collins, not to speak of Locke, wrote with uncommon power against the conception of free-will, and had many disciples on that head.
[10] Letter to the Princess of Wales, November, 1715, in Brewster, ii, 284–85.
[11] Second Letter to Clarke, par. 1.
[12] *Abstract from the Works of John Hutchinson*, 1755, pp. 149–63.

world."[1] Alongside of such internecine strife, it was not surprising that the great astronomer Halley, who accepted Newton's principles in physics, was commonly reputed an atheist; and that the free-thinkers pitted his name in that connection against Newton's.[2] As it was he who first suggested[3] the idea of the total motion of the entire solar system in space—described by a modern pietist as "this great cosmical truth, the grandest in astronomy"[4]—they were not ill justified. It can hardly be doubted that if intellectual England could have been polled in 1710, under no restraints from economic, social, and legal pressure, some form of rationalism inconsistent with Christianity would have been found to be nearly as common as orthodoxy. In outlying provinces, in Devon and Cornwall, in Ulster, in Edinburgh and Glasgow, as well as in the metropolis, the pressure of deism on the popular creed evoked expressions of Arian and Socinian thought among the clergy.[5] It was, in fact, the various restraints under notice that determined the outward fortunes of belief and unbelief, and have substantially determined them since. When the devout Whiston was deposed from his professorship for his Arianism, and the unbelieving Saunderson was put in his place,[6] and when Simson was suspended from his ministerial functions in Glasgow,[7] the lesson was learned that outward conformity was the sufficient way to income.[8]

Hard as it was, however, to kick against the pricks of law and prejudice, it is clear that many in the upper and middle classes privately did so. The clerical and the new popular literature of the time prove this abundantly. In the *Tatler* and its successors,[9] the decorous Addison and the indecorous Steele, neither of them a competent thinker, frigidly or furiously asperse the new tribe of freethinkers; while the evangelically pious Berkeley and the extremely unevangelical Swift rival each other in the malice of

[1] Clarke's Answer to Leibnitz's First Letter, *end.*

[2] Berkeley, *Defence of Freethinking in Mathematics*, par. vii; and Stock's Memoir of Berkeley. Cp. Brewster, *Memoirs of Newton*, ii, 408.

[3] In the *Philosophical Transactions*, 1718, No. 355, i, v, vi.

[4] Brewster, *More Worlds than One*, 1854, p. 110.

[5] Lecky, *Hist. of England in the Eighteenth Cent.* ed. 1892, iii, 22–24.

[6] The tradition of Saunderson's unbelief is constant. In the memoir prefixed to his *Elements of Algebra* (1740) no word is said of his creed, though at death he received the sacrament.

[7] See *The State of the Process depending against Mr. John Simson*, Edinburgh, 1728. Simson always expressed himself piously, but had thrown out such expressions as *Ratio est principium et fundamentum theologiæ*, which "contravened the Act of Assembly, 1717" (vol. cited, p. 316). The "process" against him began in 1714, and dragged on for nearly twenty years, with the result of his resigning his professorship of theology at Glasgow in 1729, and seceding from the Associate Presbytery in 1733. Burton, *History of Scotland*, viii, 399–400.

[8] Cp. the pamphlet by "A Presbyter of the Church of England," attributed to Bishop Hare, cited in *Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 177–78, and by Lecky, iii, 25.

[9] *Tatler*, Nos. 12, 111, 135; *Spectator*, Nos. 234, 381, 389, 599; *Guardian*, Nos. 3, 9, 27, 35, 39, 55, 62, 70, 77, 83, 88, 126, 130, 169. Most of the *Guardian* papers cited are by Berkeley. They are extremely virulent; but Steele's run them hard.

their attacks on those who rejected their creed. Berkeley, a man of philosophic genius but intense prepossessions, maintained Christianity on grounds which are the negation of philosophy.[1] Swift, the genius of neurotic misanthropy, who, in the words of Macaulay, "though he had no religion, had a great deal of professional spirit,"[2] fought venomously for the creed of salvation. And still the deists multiplied. In the EARL OF SHAFTESBURY[3] they had a satirist with a finer and keener weapon than was wielded by either Steele or Addison, and a much better temper than was owned by Swift or Berkeley. He did not venture to parade his unbelief: to do so was positively dangerous; but his thrusts at faith left little doubt as to his theory. He was at once dealt with by the orthodox as an enemy, and as promptly adopted by the deists as a champion, important no less for his ability than for his rank. Nor, indeed, is he lacking in boldness in comparison with contemporary writers. The anonymous pamphlet entitled *The Natural History of Superstition*, by the deist John Trenchard, M.P. (1709), does not venture on overt heresy. But Shaftesbury's *Letter Concerning Enthusiasm* (1708), his *Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour* (1709), and his treatise *The Moralists* (1709), had need be anonymous because of their essential hostility to the reigning religious ethic.

Such polemic marks a new stage in rationalistic propaganda. Swift, writing in 1709, angrily proposes to "prevent the publishing of such pernicious works as under pretence of freethinking endeavour to overthrow those tenets in religion which have been held inviolable in almost all ages."[4] But his further protest that "the doctrine of the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, the immortality of the soul, and even the truth of all revelation, are daily exploded and denied in books openly printed," points mainly to the Unitarian propaganda. Among freethinkers he names, in his *Argument Against Abolishing Christianity* (1708), Asgill, Coward, Toland, and Tindal. But the first was an ultra-Christian; the second was a Christian upholder of the thesis that spirit is not immaterial; and the last, at that date, had published only his *Four Discourses* (collected in 1709) and his *Rights of the Christian Church*, which are anti-clerical, but not

[1] *Analyst*, Queries 60 and 62: *Defence of Freethinking in Mathematics*, §§ 5, 6, 50. Cp. *Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 141–42.

[2] Letter in De Morgan's *Newton: his Friend: and his Niece*, 1885, p. 69.

[3] The essays in the *Characteristics* (excepting the *Inquiry Concerning Virtue and Merit*, which was published by Toland, without permission, in 1699) appeared between 1708 and 1711, being collected in the latter year. Shaftesbury died in 1713, in which year appeared his paper on *The Judgment of Hercules*.

[4] *A Project for the Advancement of Religion*. Bohn ed. of *Works*, iii, 44. In this paper Swift reveals his moral standards by the avowal (p. 40) that "hypocrisy is much more eligible than open infidelity and vice: it wears the livery of religion.....and is cautious of giving scandal."

anti-Christian. Prof. Henry Dodwell, who about 1673 published *Two Letters of Advice, I, For the Susception of Holy Orders; II, For Studies Theological, especially such as are Rational*, and in 1706 an *Epistolary Discourse Concerning the Soul's Natural Mortality*, maintaining the doctrine of conditional immortality,[1] which he made dependent on baptism in the apostolical succession, was a devout Christian; and no writer of that date went further. Dodwell is in fact blamed by Bishop Burnet for stirring up fanaticism against lay-baptism among dissenters.[2] It would appear that Swift spoke mainly from hearsay, and on the strength of the conversational freethinking so common in society.[3] But the anonymous essays of Shaftesbury which were issued in 1709 might be the immediate provocation of his outbreak.[4]

An official picture of the situation is formally drawn in *A Representation of the Present State of Religion, with regard to the late excessive growth of infidelity, heresy, and profaneness*, drawn up by the Upper House of Convocation of the province of Canterbury in 1711.[5] This sets forth, as a result of the disorders of the Rebellion, a growth of all manner of unbelief and profanity, including denial of inspiration and the authority of the canon; the likening of Christian miracles to heathen fables; the treating of all religious mysteries as absurd speculations; Arianism and Socinianism and scoffing at the doctrine of the Trinity; denial of natural immortality; Erastianism; mockery of baptism and the Lord's Supper; decrying of all priests as impostors; the collecting and reprinting of infidel works; and publication of mock catechisms. It is explained that all such printing has greatly increased "since the expiration of the Act for restraining the press"; and mention is made of an Arian work just published to which the author has put his name, and which he has dedicated to the Convocation itself. This was the first volume of Whiston's *Primitive Christianity Revived*, the work of a devout eccentric, who had just before been deprived of his professorship at Cambridge for his orally avowed heresy. Whiston, whose cause was

[1] Sir Leslie Stephen (*English Thought*, i, 283) speaks of Dodwell's thesis as deserving only "pity or contempt." Cp. Macaulay, Student's ed. ii, 107–108. But a doctrine of conditional immortality had been explicitly put by Locke in his *Reasonableness of Christianity*, 1695, p. 13. Cp. Prof. Fraser's *Locke*, 1890, pp. 259–60, and Fox Bourne's *Life of Locke*, ii, 287. The difference was that Dodwell elaborately gave his reasons, which, as Dr. Clarke put it, made "all good men sorry, and all profane men rejoice."

[2] *History of his Own Time*, ed. 1838, p. 887.

[3] Compare his ironical *Argument Against Abolishing Christianity*, 1708.

[4] He had, however, hailed the anonymous *Letter Concerning Enthusiasm* as "very well writ," believing it to be by a friend of his own—(Robert Hunter, to whom, accordingly, it has since been mistakenly attributed by various bibliographers, including Barbier). "Enthusiasm," as meaning "popular fanaticism," was of course as repellent to a Churchman as to the deists.

[5] Printed in folio 1711. Rep. in vol. xi of the *Harleian Miscellany*, p. 168 *sq.* (2nd ed. p. 163 *sq.*).

championed, and whose clerical opponents were lampooned, in an indecorous but vigorous sketch, *The Tryal of William Whiston, Clerk, for defaming and denying the Holy Trinity, before the Lord Chief Justice Reason* (1712; 3rd ed. 1740), always remained perfectly devout in his Arian orthodoxy; but his and his friends' arguments were rather better fitted to make deists than to persuade Christians; and Convocation's appeal for a new Act "restraining the present excessive and scandalous liberty of printing wicked books at home, and importing the like from abroad" was not responded to. There was no love lost between Bolingbroke and Shaftesbury; but the government in which the former, a known deist, was Secretary of State, could hardly undertake to suppress the works of the latter.

§ 2

Deism had been thus made in a manner fashionable[1] when, in 1713, ANTHONY COLLINS (1676–1729) began a new development by his *Discourse of Freethinking*. He had previously published a notably freethinking *Essay Concerning the Use of Reason* (1707), albeit without specific impeachment of the reigning creed; carried on a discussion with Clarke on the question of the immateriality of the soul; and issued treatises entitled *Priestcraft in Perfection* (1709, dealing with the history of the Thirty-nine Articles)[2] and *A Vindication of the Divine Attributes* (1710), exposing the Hobbesian theism of Archbishop King on lines followed twenty years later by Berkeley in his *Minute Philosopher*. But none of these works aroused such a tumult as the *Discourse of Freethinking*, which may be said to sum up and unify the drift not only of previous English freethinking, but of the great contribution of Bayle, whose learning and temper influence all English deism from Shaftesbury onwards.[3] Collins's book, however, was unique in its outspokenness. To the reader of to-day, indeed, it is no very aggressive performance: the writer was a man of imperturbable amenity and genuine kindliness of nature; and his style is the completest possible contrast to that of the furious replies it elicited. It was to Collins that Locke wrote, in 1703: "Believe it, my good friend, to love truth for truth's sake is the

[1] Dr. E. Synge, of Dublin (afterwards Archbishop of Tuam), in his *Religion Tryed by the Test of Sober and Impartial Reason*, published in 1713, seems to be writing before the issue of Collins's book when he says (*Dedication*, p. 11) that the spread of the "disease not only of Heterodoxy but of Infidelity" is "too plain to be either denied or dissembled."

[2] Leslie affirms in his *Truth of Christianity Demonstrated* (1711, p. 14) that the satirical *Detection* of his *Short Method with the Deists*, to which the *Truth* is a reply, was by the author of *Priestcraft in Perfection;* but, while the *Detection* has some of Collins's humour, it lacks his amenity, and is evidently not by him.

[3] An English translation of the Dictionary, in 5 vols. folio, with "many passages restored," appeared in 1734.

principal part of human perfection in this world, and the seed-plot of all other virtues; and, if I mistake not, you have as much of it as I ever met with in anybody."[1] The *Discourse* does no discredit to this uncommon encomium, being a luminous and learned plea for the conditions under which alone truth can be prosperously studied, and the habits of mind which alone can attain it. Of the many replies, the most notorious is that of Bentley writing as *Phileleutherus Lipsiensis*, a performance which, on the strength of its author's reputation for scholarship, has been uncritically applauded by not a few critics, of whom some of the most eminent do not appear to have read Collins's treatise.[2] Bentley's is in reality pre-eminent only for insolence and bad faith, the latter complicated by lapses of scholarship hardly credible on its author's part.

> See the details in *Dynamics of Religion*, ch. vii. I am compelled to call attention to the uncritical verdict given on this matter by the late Sir Leslie Stephen, who asserts (*English Thought*, i, 206) that Bentley convicts Collins of "unworthy shuffling" in respect of his claim that freethinking had "banished the devil." Bentley affirmed that this had been the work, not of the freethinkers, but of "the Royal Society, the Boyles and the Newtons"; and Sir Leslie comments that "nothing could be more true." Nothing could be more untrue. As we have seen (above p. 82), Boyle was a convinced believer in demonology; and Newton did absolutely nothing to disperse it. Glanvill, a Royal Society man, had been a vehement supporter of the belief in witchcraft; and the Society as such never meddled with the matter. As to Collins's claim for the virtue of freethinking, Sir Leslie strangely misses the point that Collins meant by the word not unbelief, but free inquiry. He could not have meant to say that Holland was full of deists. In Collins's sense of the word, the Royal Society's work in general was freethinking work.

One mistranslation which appears to have been a printer's error, and one mis-spelling of a Greek name, are the only heads on which Bentley confutes his author. He had, in fact, neither the kind of knowledge nor the candour that could fit him to handle the problems raised. It was Bentley's cue to represent Collins as an atheist, though he was a very pronounced deist;[3] and in the first uproar

[1] *A Collection of Several Pieces of Mr. John Locke*, 1720, p. 271.

[2] *E.g.* Mark Pattison, who calls Collins's book of 178 pages a "small tract."

[3] "Ignorance," Collins writes, "is the foundation of Atheism, and Freethinking the cure of it" (*Discourse of Freethinking*, p. 105). Like Newton, he contemplated only an impossible atheism, never formulated by any writer. The *Philosophical Principles of Religion, Natural and Reveal'd*, of Dr. George Cheyne (1705, 2nd ed. 1715), similarly declares (pref. *end*) that "if the modern [*i.e.* Newtonian] philosophy demonstrates nothing else, yet it infallibly proves Atheism to be the most gross ignorance." Thus the vindicator of "religion" was writing in the key of the deist.

Collins thought it well to fly to Holland to avoid arrest.[1] But deism was too general to permit of such a representative being exiled; and he returned to study quietly, leaving Bentley's vituperation and prevarication unanswered, with the other attacks made upon him. In 1715 he published his brief but masterly *Inquiry Concerning Human Liberty*—anonymous, like all his works—which remains unsurpassed as a statement of the case for Determinism.[2]

The welcome given to Bentley's attack upon Collins by the orthodox was warm in proportion to their sense of the general inadequacy of the apologetics on their side. Amid the common swarm of voluble futilities put forth by Churchmen, the strident vehemence as well as the erudite repute of the old scholar were fitted at least to attract the attention of lay readers in general. Most of the contemporary vindications of the faith, however, were fitted only to move intelligent men to new doubt or mere contempt. A sample of the current defence against deism is the treatise of Joseph Smith on *The Unreasonableness of Deism, or, the Certainty of a Divine Revelation*, etc. 1720, where deists in general are called "the Wicked and Unhappy men we have to deal with":[3] and the argumentation consists in alleging that a good God must reveal himself, and that if the miracle stories of the New Testament had been false the Jews would have exposed and discarded them. Against such nugatory traditionalism, the criticism of Collins shone with the spirit of science. Not till 1723 did he publish his next work, *A Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion*, a weighty attack on the argument from prophecy, to which the replies numbered thirty-five; on which followed in 1727 his *Scheme of Literal Prophecy Considered*, a reply to criticisms. The former work was pronounced by Warburton one of the most plausible ever written against Christianity, and he might well say so. It faced the argument from prophecy not merely with the skepticism of the ordinary deist, but with that weapon of critical analysis of which the use had been briefly shown by Hobbes and Spinoza. Apparently for the first time, he pointed out that the "virgin prophecy" in Isaiah had a plain reference to contemporary and not to future events; he showed that the "out of Egypt" prophecy referred to the Hebrew past; and he revived the ancient demonstration of Porphyry that the Book of Daniel is

[1] Mr. Temple Scott, in his Bohn ed. of Swift's Works (iii, 166), asserts that Swift's satire "frightened Collins into Holland." For this statement there is no evidence whatever, and as it stands it is unintelligible. The assertion that Collins had had to fly to Holland in 1711 (Dr. Conybeare, *Hist. of N. T. Crit.* R. P. A. 1910, p. 38) is also astray.

[2] Second ed. 1717. Another writer, William Lyons, was on the same track, publishing *The Infallibility of Human Judgment, its Dignity and Excellence* (2nd ed. 1720), and *A Discourse of the Necessity of Human Actions* (1730).

[3] Work cited, p. 13.

Maccabean. The general dilemma put by Collins—that either the prophecies must be reduced, textually and otherwise, to non-prophetic utterances, or Christianity must give up prophetic claims—has never since been solved.

The deistic movement was now in full flood, the acute MANDEVILLE[1] having issued in 1720 his *Free Thoughts on Religion*, and in 1723 a freshly-expanded edition of his very anti-evangelical *Fable of the Bees;* while an eccentric ex-clergyman, THOMAS WOOLSTON, who had already lost his fellowship of Sidney-Sussex College, Cambridge, for vagaries of doctrine and action, contributed in 1726–28 his freshly reasoned but heedlessly ribald *Discourses on Miracles.* Voltaire, who was in England in 1728, tells that thirty thousand copies were sold;[2] while sixty pamphlets were written in opposition. Woolston's were indeed well fitted to arouse wrath and rejoinder. The dialectic against the argument from miracles in general, and the irrelevance or nullity of certain miracles in particular, is really cogent, and anticipates at points the thought of the nineteenth century. But Woolston was of the tribe who can argue no issue without jesting, and who stamp levity on every cause by force of innate whimsicality. Thus he could best sway the light-hearted when his cause called for the winning-over of the earnest. Arguments that might have been made convincing were made to pass as banter, and serious spirits were repelled. It was during this debate that CONYERS MIDDLETON, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, produced his *Letter from Rome* (1729), wherein the part of paganism in Christianity is so set forth as to carry inference further than the argument ostensibly goes. In that year the heads of Oxford University publicly lamented the spread of open deism among the students; and the proclamation did nothing to check the contagion. In *Fogg's Weekly Journal* of July 4, 1730, it is announced that "one of the principal colleges in Oxford has of late been infested with deists; and that three deistical students have been expelled; and a fourth has had his degree deferred two years, during which he is to be closely confined in college; and, among other things, is to translate Leslie's *Short and*

[1] As to whose positions see a paper in the writer's *Pioneer Humanists*, 1907.

[2] There were six separate *Discourses.* Voltaire speaks of "three editions *coup sur coup* of ten thousand each" (*Lettre sur les auteurs Anglais*—in *Œuvres*, ed. 1792, lxviii, 359). This seems extremely unlikely as to any one *Discourse;* and even 5,000 copies of each *Discourse* is a hardly credible sale, though the writer of the sketch of his life (1733) says that "the sale of Mr. Woolston's works was very great." In any case, Woolston's *Discourses* are now seldomer met with than Collins's *Discourse of Freethinking.* Alberti (*Briefe betreffende den Zustand der Religion in Gross-Brittannien*) wrote in 1752 that the *Discourses* were even in that day somewhat rare, and seldom found together. Many copies were probably destroyed by the orthodox, and many would doubtless be thrown away, as tracts so often are.

Easy Method with the Deists."[1] It is not hard to divine the effect of such exegetic methods. In 1731, the author of an apologetic pamphlet in reply to Woolston laments that even at the universities young men "too often" become tainted with "infidelity"; and, on the other hand, directing his battery against those who "causelessly profess to build their skeptical notions" on the writings of Locke, he complains of Dr. Holdsworth and other academic polemists who had sought to rob orthodoxy of the credit of such a champion as Locke by "consigning him over to that class of freethinkers and skeptics to which he was an adversary."[2]

With the most famous work of MATTHEW TINDAL,[3] *Christianity as Old as Creation* (1730), the excitement seems to have reached high-water mark. Here was vivacity without flippancy, and argument without irrelevant mirth; and the work elicited from first to last over a hundred and fifty replies, at home and abroad. Tindal's thesis is that the idea of a good God involved that of a simple, perfect, and universal religion, which must always have existed among mankind, and must have essentially consisted in moral conduct. Christianity, insofar as it is true, must therefore be a statement of this primordial religion; and moral reason must be the test, not tradition or Scripture. One of the first replies was the *Vindication of Scripture* by Waterland, to which Middleton promptly offered a biting retort in a *Letter to Dr. Waterland* (1731) that serves to show the slightness of its author's faith. After demolishing Waterland's case as calculated rather to arouse than to allay skepticism, he undertakes to offer a better reply of his own. It is to the simple effect that some religion is necessary to mankind in modern as in ancient times; that Christianity meets the need very well; and that to set up reason in its place is "impracticable" and "the attempt therefore foolish and irrational," in addition to being "criminal and immoral," when politically considered.[4] Such legalist criticism, if seriously meant, was hardly likely to discredit Tindal's book. Its directness and simplicity of appeal to what passed for theistic common-sense were indeed fitted to give it the widest audience yet won by any deist; and its anti-clericalism would carry it far among his fellow Whigs to begin with.[5] One tract of the

[1] Tyerman's *Life of Wesley*, ed. 1871, i, 65–66. [2] *The Infidel Convicted*, 1731, pp. 33, 62.

[3] Tindal (1653–1733) was the son of a clergyman, and in 1678 was elected a Fellow of All Souls, Oxford. From 1685 to 1688 he was a Roman Catholic. Under William III he wrote three works on points of political freedom—one, 1698, on *The Liberty of the Press*. His *Rights of the Christian Church*, anonymously published in 1706, a defence of Erastianism, made a great sensation, and was prosecuted—only to be reprinted. His later *Defence of the Rights of the Christian Church* was in 1710, by order of the House of Commons, burned by the common hangman.

[4] Middleton's *Works*, 2nd ed. 1755, iii, 50–56.

[5] Tindal (Voltaire tells) regarded Pope as devoid of genius and imagination, and so trebly earned his place in the *Dunciad*.

period, dedicated to the Queen Regent, complains that "the present raging infidelity threatens an universal infection," and that it is not confined to the capital, but "is disseminated even to the confines of your kingdom."[1] Tindal, like Collins, wrote anonymously, and so escaped prosecution, dying in 1733, when the second part of his book, left ready for publication, was deliberately destroyed by Bishop Gibson, into whose hands it came. In 1736 he and Shaftesbury are described by an orthodox apologist as the "two oracles of deism."[2]

Woolston, who put his name to his books, after being arrested in May, 1728, and released on bail, was prosecuted in 1729 on the charge of blasphemy, in that he had derided the gospel miracles and represented Jesus alternately as an impostor, a sorcerer, and a magician. His friendly counsel ingeniously argued that Woolston had aimed at safeguarding Christianity by returning to the allegorical method of the early Fathers; and that he had shown his reverence for Jesus and religion by many specific expressions; but the jury took a simpler view, and, without leaving the court, found Woolston guilty. He was sentenced to pay a fine of £100, to suffer a year's imprisonment, and either to find surety for his future good conduct or pay or give sureties for £2,000.[3] He is commonly said to have paid the penalty of imprisonment for the rest of his life (d. 1733). being unable to pay the fine of £100; but Voltaire positively asserts that "nothing is more false" than the statement that he died in prison; adding: "Several of my friends have seen him in his house: he died there, at liberty."[4] The solution of the conflict seems to be that he lived in his own house "in the rules of" the King's Bench Prison—that is, in the precincts, and under technical supervision.[5] In any case, he was sentenced; and the punishment was the measure of the anger felt at the continuous advance of deistic opinions, or at least against hostile criticism of the Scriptures.

§ 3

Unitarianism, formerly a hated heresy, was now in comparison leniently treated, because of its deference to Scriptural authority,

[1] *A Layman's Faith*....."By a Freethinker and a Christian," 1732.
[2] Title-page of Rev. Elisha Smith's *Cure of Deism*, 1st ed. 1736; 3rd ed. 1740.
[3] Le Moine, *Dissertation historique sur les écrits de Woolston, sa condemnation*, etc. pp. 29–31, cited by Salchi, *Lettres sur le Déisme*, 1759, p. 67 *sq.*
[4] *Lettre sur les auteurs Anglais*, as cited. Voltaire tells that, when a she-bigot one day spat in Woolston's face, he calmly remarked: "It was so that the Jews treated your God." Another story reads like a carefully-improved version of the foregoing. A woman is said to have accosted him as a scoundrel, and asked him why he was not yet hanged. On his asking her grounds for such an accost, she replied: "You have writ against my Saviour. What would become of my poor sinful soul if it was not for my dear Saviour—my Saviour who died for such wicked sinners as I am." *Life of Mr. Woolston*, prefixed to a reprint of his collected *Discourses*, 1733, p. 27. Cp. Salchi, p. 78.
[5] Life cited, pp. 22, 26, 29.

Where the deists rejected all revelation, Unitarianism held by the Bible, calling only for a revision of the central Christian dogma. It had indeed gained much theological ground in the past quarter of a century. Nothing is more instructive in the culture-history of the period than the rapidity with which the Presbyterian succession of clergy passed from violent Calvinism, by way of "Baxterian" Arminianism, to Arianism, and thence in many cases to Unitarianism. First they virtually adopted the creed of the detested Laud, whom their fathers had hated for it; then they passed step by step to a heresy for which their fathers had slain men. A closely similar process took place in Geneva, where Servetus after death triumphed over his slayer.[1] In 1691, after a generation of common suffering, a precarious union was effected between the English Presbyterians, now mostly semi-Arminians, and the Independents, still mostly Calvinists: but in 1694 it was dissolved.[2] Thereafter the former body, largely endowed by the will of Lady Hewley in 1710, became as regards its Trust Deeds the freest of all the English sects in matters of doctrine.[3] The recognition of past changes had made their clergy chary of a rigid subscription. Naturally the movement did not gain in popularity as it fell away from fanaticism; but the decline of Nonconformity in the first half of the eighteenth century was common to all the sects, and did not specially affect the Presbyterians. Of the many "free" churches established in England and Wales after the Act of Toleration (1689), about half were extinct in 1715;[4] and of the Presbyterian churches the number in Yorkshire alone fell from fifty-nine in 1715 to a little over forty in 1730.[5] Economic causes were probably the main ones. The State-endowed parish priest had an enduring advantage over his rival. But the Hewley endowment gave a certain economic basis to the Presbyterians; and the concern for scholarship which had always marked their body kept them more open to intellectual influences than the ostensibly more free-minded and certainly more democratic sectaries of the Independent and Baptist bodies.[6]

The result was that, with free Trust Deeds, the Presbyterians

[1] *An Historical Defence of the Trustees of Lady Hewley's Foundations*, by the Rev. Joseph Hunter, 1834, pp. 17, 35; *The History, Opinions, and present legal position of the English Presbyterians*, 1834, pp. 18, 29; Skeats, *History of the Free Churches of England*, ed. Miall, p. 240.

[2] Hunter, as cited, p. 17; *History of the Presbyterians*, as cited, p. 19; Fletcher, *History of Independency*, 1862, iv. 266–67.

[3] Hunter, pp. 37, 39.

[4] Skeats, as cited, p. 226.

[5] Hunter, pp. 24–25.

[6] Skeats (pp. 239–40) sums up that while the Baptists had probably "never been entirely free from the taint" of Unitarianism, the Particular Baptists and the Congregationalists were saved from it by their lack of men of "eminently speculative mind"; while the Presbyterians "were men, for the most part, of larger reading than other Nonconformists, and the writings of Whiston and Clarke had found their way among them." But the tendency existed before Whiston and Clarke.

openly exhibited a tendency which was latent in all the other churches. In 1719, at a special assembly of Presbyterian ministers at Salters' Hall, it was decided by a majority of 73 to 69 that subscription to the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity should no longer be demanded of candidates for the ministry.[1] Of the 73, the majority professed to be themselves orthodox; but there was no question that antitrinitarian opinions had become common, especially in Devonshire, where the heresy case of Mr. Peirce of Exeter had brought the matter to a crisis.[2] From this date "Arian" opinions spread more rapidly in the dwindling denomination, shading yet further into Unitarianism, step for step with the deistic movement in the Church. "In less than half a century the doctrines of the great founders of Presbyterianism could scarcely be heard from any Presbyterian pulpit in England."[3] "In the English Presbyterian ministry the process was from Arian opinions to those called Unitarian.....by a gradual sliding," even as the transition had been made from Calvinism to Arminianism in the previous century.[4]

Presbyterianism having thus come pretty much into line with Anglicanism on the old question of predestination, while still holding fast by Scriptural standards as against the deists, the old stress of Anglican dislike had slackened, despite the rise of the new heretical element. Unitarian arguments were now forthcoming from quarters not associated with dissent, as in the case of THOMAS CHUBB'S first treatise, *The Supremacy of the Father Asserted* (1715), courteously dedicated "To the Reverend the Clergy, and in particular to the Right Reverend Gilbert Lord Bishop of Sarum, our vigilant and laborious Diocesan." Chubb (1679–1747) had been trained to glove-making, and, as his opponents took care to record, acted also as a tallow-chandler;[5] and the good literary quality of his work made some sensation in an England which had not learned to think respectfully of Bunyan. Chubb's impulse to write had come from the perusal of Whiston's *Primitive Christianity Revived*, in 1711, and that single-minded Arian published his book for him.

The Unitarians would naturally repudiate all connection with such a performance as *A Sober Reply to Mr. Higgs's Merry Arguments from the Light of Nature for the Tritheistic Doctrine of the Trinity*, which was condemned by the House of Lords on

[1] *History*, cited, p. 22; Hunter, pp. 44–45; Skeats, pp. 243–44.
[2] Skeats, pp. 240–43, 245 *sq.* [3] Skeats, p. 248. [4] Hunter, p. 50.
[5] As Sir Leslie Stephen has observed (*English Thought*, i, 164), Chubb "deserves the praise of Malthusians." Having a sufficiency of means for himself, but not more, he "lived a single life, judging it greatly improper to introduce a family into the world without a prospect of maintaining them." The proverb as to mouths and meat, he drily observes, had not been verified in his experience. (*The Author's Account of Himself*, pref. to *Posthumous Works*, 1748, i, p. iv.)

February 12, 1720, to be burnt, as having "in a daring, impious manner, ridiculed the doctrine of the Trinity and all revealed religion." Its author, Joseph Hall, a serjeant-at-arms to the King, seems to have undergone no punishment, and more decorous antitrinitarians received public countenance. Thus the Unitarian Edward Elwall,[1] who had published a book called *A True Testimony for God and his Sacred Law* (1724), for which he was prosecuted at Stafford in 1726, was allowed by the judge to argue his cause fully, and was unconditionally acquitted, to the displeasure of the clergy.

§ 4

Anti-scriptural writers could not hope for such toleration, being doubly odious to the Church. Berkeley, in 1721, had complained bitterly[2] of the general indifference to religion, which his writings had done nothing to alter; and in 1736 he angrily demanded that blasphemy should be punished like high treason.[3] His *Minute Philosopher* (1732) betrays throughout his angry consciousness of the vogue of freethinking after twenty years of resistance from his profession; and that performance is singularly ill fitted to alter the opinions of unbelievers. In his earlier papers attacking them he had put a stress of malice that, in a mind of his calibre, is startling even to the student of religious history.[4] It reveals him as no less possessed by the passion of creed than the most ignorant priest of his Church. For him all freethinkers were detested disturbers of his emotional life; and of the best of them, as Collins, Shaftesbury, and Spinoza, he speaks with positive fury. In the *Minute Philosopher*, half-conscious of the wrongness of his temper, he sets himself to make the unbelievers figure in dialogue as ignorant, pretentious, and coarse-natured; while his own mouthpieces are meant to be benign, urbane, wise, and persuasive. Yet in the very pages so planned he unwittingly reveals that the freethinkers whom he goes about to caricature were commonly good-natured in tone, while he becomes as virulent as ever in his eagerness to discredit them. Not a paragraph in the book attains to the spirit of judgment or fairness; all is special pleading, overstrained and embittered sarcasm, rankling animus. Gifted alike for literature and for philosophy, keen of vision in economic problems where the mass of men were short-sighted, he was flawed on the side of his faith by the hysteria to which it always

[1] One of the then numerous tribe of eccentrics, who held by Judaic Sabbatarianism, and affected a Rabbinical costume. He made a competence, however, as an ironmonger.
[2] *Essay Towards Preventing the Ruin of Great Britain.*
[3] *Discourse to Magistrates.*
[4] *Guardian*, Nos. 3, 55, 88.

stirred him. No man was less qualified to write a well-balanced dialogue as between his own side and its opponents. To candour he never attains, unless it be in the sense that his passion recoils on his own case. Even while setting up ninepins of ill-put "infidel" argument to knock down, he elaborates futilities of rebuttal, indicating to every attentive reader the slightness of his rational basis.

On the strength of this performance he might fitly be termed the most ill-conditioned sophist of his age, were it not for the perception that religious feeling in him has become a pathological phase, and that he suffers incomparably more from his own passions than he can inflict on his enemies by his eager thrusts at them. More than almost any gifted pietist of modern times he sets us wondering at the power of creed in certain cases to overgrow judgment and turn to naught the rarest faculties. No man in Berkeley's day had a finer natural lucidity and suppleness of intelligence; yet perhaps no polemist on his side did less either to make converts or to establish a sound intellectual practice. Plain men on the freethinking side he must either have bewildered by his metaphysic or revolted by his spite; while to the more efficient minds he stood revealed as a kind of inspired child, rapt in the construction and manipulation of a set of brilliant sophisms which availed as much for any other creed as for his own. To the armoury of Christian apologetic now growing up in England he contributed a special form of the skeptical argument: freethinkers, he declared, made certain arbitrary or irrational assumptions in accepting Newton's doctrine of fluxions, and it was only their prejudice that prevented them from being similarly accommodating to Christian mysteries.[1] It is a kind of argument dear to minds pre-convinced and incapable of a logical revision, but worse than inept as against opponents; and it availed no more in Berkeley's hands than it had done in those of Huet.[2] To theosophy, indeed, Berkeley rendered a more successful service in presenting it with the no better formula of "existence [*i.e.*, *in* consciousness] dependent *upon* consciousness"—a verbalism which has served the purposes of theology in the philosophic schools down till our own day. For his, however, the popular polemic value of such a theorem must have been sufficiently countervailed by his vehement championship of the doctrine of passive obedience in its most extreme form—"that loyalty is a virtue or moral duty; and disloyalty or rebellion, in the most strict and proper sense, a vice or crime against the law of nature."[3]

[1] *The Analyst*, Queries, 55–67. [2] See above, pp. 126–28.
[3] *Discourse of Passive Obedience*, § 26.

It belonged to the overstrung temperament of Berkeley that, like a nervous artist, he should figure to himself all his freethinking antagonists as personally odious, himself growing odious under the obsession; and he solemnly asserts, in his *Discourse to Magistrates*, that there had been "lately set up within this city of Dublin" an "execrable fraternity of blasphemers," calling themselves "blasters," and forming "a distinct society, whereof the proper and avowed business shall be to shock all serious Christians by the most impious and horrid blasphemies, uttered in the most public manner."[1] There appears to be not a grain of truth in this astonishing assertion, to which no subsequent historian has paid the slightest attention. In a period in which freethinking books had been again and again burned in Dublin by the public hangman, such a society could be projected only in a nightmare; and Berkeley's hallucination may serve as a sign of the extent to which his judgment had been deranged by his passions.[2] His forensic temper is really on a level with that of the most incompetent swashbucklers on his side.

When educated Christians could be so habitually envenomed as was Berkeley, there was doubtless a measure of contrary heat among English unbelievers; but, apart altogether from what could be described as blasphemy, unbelief abounded in the most cultured society of the day. Bolingbroke's rationalism had been privately well known; and so distinguished a personage as the brilliant and scholarly Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, hated by Pope, is one of the reputed freethinkers of her time.[3] In the very year of the publication of Berkeley's *Minute Philosopher*, the first two epistles of the *Essay on Man* of his own friend and admirer, Pope, gave a new currency to the form of optimistic deism created by Shaftesbury, and later elaborated by Bolingbroke. Pope was always anxiously hostile in his allusions to the professed freethinkers[4]—among whom Bolingbroke only posthumously enrolled himself—and in private he specially aspersed Shaftesbury, from whom he had taken so much;[5] but his prudential tactic gave all

[1] *Works*, ed. 1837, p. 352.

[2] See the whole context, which palpitates with excitement.

[3] Mr. Walter Sichel (*Bolingbroke and his Times*, 1901, i, 175) thinks fit to dispose of her attitude as "her aversion to the Church and to everything that transcended her own faculties." So far as the evidence goes, her faculties were much superior to those of most of her orthodox contemporaries. For her tone see her letters.

[4] *E.g. Dunciad*, ii, 399; iii, 212; iv, 492.

[5] Voltaire commented pointedly on Pope's omission to make any reference to Shaftesbury, while vending his doctrine. (*Lettres Philosophiques*, xxii.) As a matter of fact Pope does in the *Dunciad* (iv, 488) refer maliciously to the Theocles of Shaftesbury's *Moralists* as maintaining a Lucretian theism or virtual atheism. The explanation is that Shaftesbury had sharply criticized the political course of Bolingbroke, who in turn ignored him as a thinker. See the present writer's introd. to Shaftesbury's *Characteristics*, ed. 1900 (rep. in *Pioneer Humanists*); and cp. W. R. Scott, *Francis Hutcheson*, 1900, p. 101.

the more currency to the virtual deism he enunciated. Given out without any critical allusion to Christianity, and put forward as a vindication of the ways of God to men, it gave to heresy, albeit in a philosophically incoherent exposition, the status of a well-bred piety. A good authority pronounces that "the *Essay on Man* did more to spread English deism in France than all the works of Shaftesbury";[1] and we have explicit testimony that the poet privately avowed the deistic view of things.[2]

The line of the *Essay* which now reads:

The soul, uneasy and confined *from* home,

originally ran "*at* home"; but, says Warton, "this expression seeming to exclude a future existence, *as, to speak the plain truth, it was intended to do*, it was altered"—presumably by Warburton. (Warton's *Essay on Pope*, 4th ed. ii, 67.) The Spinozistic or pantheistic character of much of the *Essay on Man* was noted by various critics, in particular by the French Academician De Crousaz (*Examen de l'Essay de M. Pope sur l'Homme*, 1748, p. 90, etc.) After promising to justify the ways of God to man, writes Crousaz (p. 33), Pope turns round and justifies man, leaving God charged with all men's sins. When the younger Racine, writing to the Chevalier Ramsay in 1742, charged the *Essay* with irreligion, Pope wrote him repudiating alike Spinoza and Leibnitz. (Warton, ii, 121.) In 1755, however, the Abbé Gauchat renewed the attack, declaring that the *Essay* was "neither Christian nor philosophic" (*Lettres Critiques*, i, 346). Warburton at first charged the poem with rank atheism, and afterwards vindicated it in his manner. (Warton, i, 125.) But in Germany, in the youth of Goethe, we find the *Essay* regarded by Christians as an unequivocally deistic poem. (Goethe's *Wahrheit und Dichtung*, Th. II, B. vii: *Werke*, ed. 1866, xi, 263.) And by a modern Christian polemist the *Essay* is described as "the best positive result of English deism in the eighteenth century" (Gostwick, *German Culture and Christianity*, 1882, p. 31).

In point of fact, deism was the fashionable way of thinking among cultured people. Though Voltaire testifies from personal knowledge that there were in England in his day many principled atheists,[3] there was little overt atheism,[4] whether by reason of the special

[1] Texte, *Rousseau and the Cosmopolitan Spirit in Literature*, Eng. tr. pp. 117-18.

[2] Chesterfield in his *Characters* (app. to the *Letters*) testifies that Pope "was a deist believing in a future state; this he has often owned himself to me." (Bradshaw's ed. of *Letters*, iii, 1410.) Chesterfield makes a similar statement concerning Queen Caroline:—"After puzzling herself in all the whimsies and fantastical speculations of different sects, she fixed herself ultimately in Deism, believing in a future state." (*Id.* p. 1406.)

[3] *Dict. Philos.* art. ATHÉE, § 2.

[4] Wise, in his adaptation of Cudworth, *A Confutation of the Reason and Philosophy of Atheism* (1706), writes (i. 5) that "the philosophical atheists are but few in number," and their objections so weak "as that they deserve not a hearing but rather neglect"; but confusedly goes on to admit that "one or two broachers of 'em may be thought able to infect a whole nation, as.....sad experience tells us."

odium attaching to that way of thought, or of a real production of theistic belief by the concurrence of the deistic propaganda on this head with that of the clergy, themselves in so many cases deists.[1] Bishop Burnet, in the Conclusion to the *History of his Own Time*, pronounces that "there are few atheists, but many infidels, who are indeed very little better than the atheists." Collins observed that nobody had doubted the existence of God until the Boyle lecturers began to prove it; and Clarke had more than justified the jest by arguing, in his Boyle Lectures for 1705, that all deism logically leads to atheism. But though the apologists roused much discussion on the theistic issue, the stress of the apologetic literature passed from the theme of atheism to that of deism. Shaftesbury's early *Inquiry Concerning Virtue* had assumed the existence of a good deal of atheism; but his later writings, and those of his school, do not indicate much atheistic opposition.[2] Even the revived discussion on the immateriality and immortality of the soul—which began with the *Grand Essay* of Dr. William Coward,[3] in 1704, and was taken up, as we have seen, by the non-juror Dodwell[4]—was conducted on either orthodox or deistic lines. Coward wrote as a professed Christian,[5] to maintain, "against impostures of philosophy," that "matter and motion must be the foundation of thought in men and brutes." Collins maintained against Clarke the proposition that matter is capable of thought; and SAMUEL STRUTT ("of the Temple"), whose *Philosophical Inquiry into the Physical Spring of Human Actions, and the Immediate Cause of Thinking* (1732), is a most tersely cogent sequence of materialistic argument, never raises any question of deity. The result was that the problem of "materialism" was virtually dropped, Strutt's essay in particular passing into general oblivion.

It was replied to, however, with the *Inquiry* of Collins, as late as 1760, by a Christian controversialist who admits Strutt

[1] Complaint to this effect was made by orthodox writers. The Scotch Professor Halyburton, for instance, complains that in many sermons in his day "*Heathen Morality* has been substituted in the room of *Gospel Holiness*. And Ethicks by some have been preached instead of the *Gospels* of Christ." *Natural Religion Insufficient* (Edinburgh), 1714, p. 25. Cp. pp. 23, 26–27, 59, etc. Bishop Burnet, in the Conclusion to his *History of his Own Time*, declares, "I must own that the main body of our clergy has always seemed dead and lifeless to me," and ascribes much more zeal to Catholics and dissenters. (Ed. 1838, pp. 907–910.)

[2] *The Moralists* deals rather with strict skepticism than with substantive atheism.

[3] *The Grand Essay: or, a Vindication of Reason and Religion against Impostures of Philosophy*. The book was, on March 18, 1704, condemned by the House of Commons to be burned in Palace Yard, along with its author's *Second Thoughts Concerning the Human Soul* (1702). A second ed. of the latter appeared soon after.

[4] Above, p. 153.

[5] Mr. Herbert Paul, in his essay on Swift (*Men and Letters*, 1901, p. 267), lumps as deists the four writers named by Swift in his *Argument*. Not having read them, he thinks fit to asperse all four as bad writers. Asgill, as was noted by Coleridge (*Table Talk*, July 30, 1831; April 30, 1832), was one of the best writers of his time. He was, in fact, a master of the staccato style, practised by Mr. Paul with less success.

to have been "a gentleman of an excellent genius for philosophical inquiries, and a close reasoner from those principles he laid down" (*An Essay towards demonstrating the Immateriality and Free Agency of the Soul*, 1760, p. 94). The Rev. Mr. Monk, in his *Life of Bentley* (2nd ed. 1833, ii, 391), absurdly speaks of Strutt as having "dressed up the arguments of Lord Herbert of Cherbury and other enemies of religion in a new shape." The reverend gentleman cannot have paid any attention to the arguments either of Herbert or of Strutt, which have no more in common than those of Toland and Hume. Strutt's book was much too closely reasoned to be popular. His name was for the time, however, associated with a famous scandal at Cambridge University. When in 1739 proceedings were taken against what was described as an "atheistical society" there, Strutt was spoken of as its "oracle." One of the members was Paul Whitehead, satirized by Pope. Another, Tinkler Ducket, a Fellow of Caius College, in holy orders, was prosecuted in the Vice-Chancellor's Court on the twofold charge of proselytizing for atheism and of attempting to seduce a "female." In his defence he explained that he had been for some time "once more a believer in God and Christianity"; but was nevertheless expelled. See Monk's *Life of Bentley*, as cited, ii, 391 *sq.*

§ 5

No less marked is the failure to develop the "higher criticism" from the notable start made in 1739 in the very remarkable *Inquiry into the Jewish and Christian Revelations* by Samuel Parvish, who made the vital discovery that Deuteronomy is a product of the seventh century B.C.[1] His book, which is in the form of a dialogue between a Christian and a Japanese, went into a second edition (1746); but his idea struck too deep for the critical faculty of that age, and not till the nineteenth century was the clue found again by De Wette, in Germany.[2] Parvish came at the end of the main deistic movement,[3] and by that time the more open-minded men had come to a point of view from which it did not greatly matter when Deuteronomy was written, or precisely how a cultus was built up; while orthodoxy could not dream of abandoning its view of inspiration. There was thus an arrest alike of historical criticism and of the higher philosophic thought under the stress of the concrete disputes over ethics, miracles, prophecy, and politics; and

1 Work cited, p. 324. The book is now rare.
2 Cp. Cheyne, *Founders of Old Testament Criticism*, 1893, p. 2.
3 Dr. Cheyne expresses surprise that a "theological writer" who got so far should not have been "prompted by his good genius to follow up his advantage." It is, however, rather remarkable that Parvish, who was a bookseller at Guildford (Alberti, *Briefe*, p. 426), should have achieved what he did. It was through not being a theological writer that he went so far, no theologian of his day following him.

a habit of taking deity for granted became normal, with the result that when the weak point was pressed upon by Law and Butler there was a sense of blankness on both sides. But among men theistically inclined, the argument of Tindal against revelationism was extremely telling, and it had more literary impressiveness than any writing on the orthodox side before Butler. By this time the philosophic influence of Spinoza—seen as early as 1699 in Shaftesbury's *Inquiry Concerning Virtue*,[1] and avowed by Clarke when he addressed his *Demonstration* (1705) "more particularly in answer to Mr. Hobbs, Spinoza, and their followers"—had spread among the studious class, greatly reinforcing the deistic movement; so that in 1732 Berkeley, who ranked him among "weak and wicked writers," described him as "the great leader of our modern infidels."

See the *Minute Philosopher*, Dial. vii, § 29. Similarly Leland, in the *Supplement* (1756) to his *View of the Deistical Writers* (afterwards incorporated as Letter VI), speaks of Spinoza as "the most applauded doctor of modern atheism." Sir Leslie Stephen's opinion (*English Thought*, i, 33), that "few of the deists, probably," read Spinoza, seems to be thus outweighed. If they did not in great numbers read the *Ethica*, they certainly read the *Tractatus* and the letters. As early as 1677 we find Stillingfleet, in the preface to his *Letter to a Deist*, speaking of Spinoza as "a late author [who] I hear is mightily in vogue among many who cry up anything on the atheistical side, though never so weak and trifling"; and further of a mooted proposal to translate the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* into English. A translation was published in 1689. In 1685 the Scotch Professor George Sinclar, in the "Preface to the Reader" of his *Satan's Invisible World Discovered*, writes that "There are a monstrous rable of men, who following the *Hobbesian* and *Spinosian* principles, slight religion and undervalue the Scripture," etc. In Gildon's work of recantation, *The Deist's Manual* (1705, p. 192), the indifferent Pleonexus, who "took more delight in bags than in books," and demurs to accumulating the latter, avows that he has a few, among them being Hobbes and Spinoza. Evelyn, writing about 1680–90, speaks of "that infamous book, the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*," as "a wretched obstacle to the searchers of holy truth" (*The History of Religion*, 1850, p. xxvii). Cp. Halyburton, *Natural Religion Insufficient*, Edinburgh, 1714, p. 31, as to the "great vogue among our young Gentry and Students" of Hobbes, Spinoza, and others.

[1] See the author's introduction to ed. of the *Characteristics*, 1900, rep. in *Pioneer Humanists*.

§ 6

Among the deists of the upper classes was the young William Pitt, afterwards Lord Chatham, if, as has been alleged, it was he who in 1733, two years before he entered Parliament, contributed to the *London Journal* a "Letter on Superstition," the work of a pronounced freethinker.[1] On the other hand, such deistic writing as that with which Chubb, in a multitude of tracts, followed up his early Unitarian essay of 1715, brought an ethical "Christian rationalism" within the range of the unscholarly many. THOMAS MORGAN (d. 1741), a physician, began in the *Moral Philosopher*, 1739–1740,[2] to sketch a rationalistic theory of Christian origins, besides putting the critical case with new completeness. Morgan had been at one time a dissenting minister at Frome, Somerset, and had been dismissed because of his deistical opinions. Towards the Jehovah and the ethic of the Old Testament he holds, however, the attitude rather of an ancient Gnostic than of a modern rationalist; and in his philosophy he is either a very "godly" deist or a pantheist miscarried.[3]

At the same time PETER ANNET (1693–1769), a schoolmaster and inventor of a system of shorthand, widened the propaganda in other directions. He seems to have been the first freethought lecturer, for his first pamphlet, *Judging for Ourselves: or, Free-thinking the Great Duty of Religion*, "By P. A., Minister of the Gospel" (1739), consists of "Two Lectures delivered at Plaisterers' Hall." Through all his propaganda, of which the more notable portions are his *Supernaturals Examined* and a series of controversies on the Resurrection, there runs a train of shrewd critical sense, put forth in crisp and vivacious English, which made him a popular force. What he lacked was the due gravity and dignity for the handling of such a theme as the reversal of a nation's faith. Like Woolston, he is facetious where he should be serious; entertaining where he had need be impressive; provocative where he should have aimed at persuasion. We cannot say what types he influenced, or how deep his influence went: it appears only that he swayed many whose suffrages weighed little. At length, when in 1761 he issued nine numbers of *The Free Inquirer*, in which he attacked the Pentateuch with much insight and cogency, but with a certain

[1] The question remains obscure. Cp. the Letter cited, reprinted at end of Carver's 1830 ed. of Paine's Works (New York); F. Thackeray's *Life of Chatham*, ii, 405; and Chatham's "scalping-knife" speech.

[2] *A Vindication of the Moral Philosopher* appeared in 1741.

[3] Cp. Lechler, pp. 371, 386.

want of rational balance (shown also in his treatise, *Social Bliss Considered*, 1749), he was made a victim of the then strengthened spirit of persecution, being sentenced to stand thrice in the pillory with the label "For Blasphemy," and to suffer a year's hard labour. Nevertheless, he was popular enough to start a school on his release.

Such popularity, of course, was alien to the literary and social traditions of the century; and from the literary point of view the main line of deistic propaganda, as apart from the essays and treatises of Hume and the posthumous works of Bolingbroke, ends with the younger HENRY DODWELL'S (anonymous) ironical essay, *Christianity not Founded on Argument* (1741). So rigorously congruous is the reasoning of that brilliant treatise that some have not quite unjustifiably taken it for the work of a dogmatic believer, standing at some such position as that taken up before him by Huet, and in recent times by Cardinal Newman.[1] He argues, for instance, not merely that reason can yield none of the confidence which belongs to true faith, but that it cannot duly strengthen the moral will against temptations.[2] But the book at once elicited a number of replies, all treating it unhesitatingly as an anti-Christian work; and Leland assails it as bitterly as he does any openly freethinking treatise.[3] Its thesis might have been seriously supported by reference to the intellectual history of the preceding thirty years, wherein much argument had certainly failed to establish the reigning creed or to discredit the unbelievers.

§ 7

Of the work done by English deism thus far, it may suffice to say that within two generations it had more profoundly altered the intellectual temper of educated men than any religious movement had ever done in the same time. This appears above all from the literature produced by orthodoxy in reply, where the mere defensive resort to reasoning, apart from the accounts of current rationalism, outgoes anything in the previous history of literature. The whole evolution is a remarkable instance of the effect on intellectual progress of the diversion of a nation's general energy from war and intense political faction to mental activities. A similar diversion had taken place at the Restoration, to be followed by a return to civil and foreign strife, which arrested it. It was in the closing years of Anne, and in the steady *régime* of Walpole under the first two Georges, that the ferment worked at its height. Collins's

[1] Cp. Cairns, *Unbelief in the Eighteenth Century*, 1881, p. 101.
[2] Ed. 1741, p. 30 *sq.*
[3] *View of the Deistical Writers*, Letter XI (X in 1st ed.).

Discourse of Freethinking was synchronous with the Peace of Utrecht: the era of war re-opened in 1739, much against the will of Walpole, who resigned in 1742. Home and foreign wars thereafter became common; and in 1751 Clive opened the period of imperialistic expansion, determining national developments on that main line, concurrently with that of the new industry. Could the discussion have been continuous—could England have remained what she was in the main deistic period, a workshop of investigation and a battleground of ideas—all European development might have been indefinitely hastened. But the deists, for the most part educated men appealing to educated men or to the shrewdest readers among the artisans, had not learned to reckon with the greater social forces; and beyond a certain point they could not affect England's intellectual destinies.

It is worse than idle to argue that "the true cause of the decay of deism is to be sought in its internal weakness," in the sense that "it was not rooted in the deepest convictions, nor associated with the most powerful emotions of its adherents."[1] No such charge can be even partially proved. The deists were at least as much in earnest as two-thirds of the clergy: the determining difference, in this regard, was the economic basis of the latter, and their social hold of an ignorant population. The clergy, who could not argue the deists down in the court of culture, had in their own jurisdiction the great mass of the uneducated lower classes, and the great mass of the women of all classes, whom the ideals of the age kept uneducated, with a difference. And while the more cultured clergy were themselves in large measure deists, the majority, in the country parishes, remained uncritical and unreflective, caring little even to cultivate belief among their flocks. The "contempt of the clergy" which had subsisted from the middle of the seventeenth century (if, indeed, it should not be dated from the middle of the sixteenth) meant among other things that popular culture remained on a lower plane. With the multitude remaining a ready hotbed for new "enthusiasm," and the women of the middle and upper orders no less ready nurturers of new generations of young believers, the work of emancipation was but begun when deism was made "fashionable." And with England on the way to a new era at once of industrial and imperial expansion, in which the energies that for a generation had made her a leader of European thought were diverted to arms and to commerce, the critical and rationalizing work of the deistical generation could not go on as

[1] Sir Leslie Stephen, *English Thought*, i, 169.

it had begun. That generation left its specific mark on the statute-book in a complete repeal of the old laws relating to witchcraft;[1] on literature in a whole library of propaganda and apology; on moral and historic science in a new movement of humanism, which was to find its check in the French Revolution.

How it affected the general intelligence for good may be partly gathered from a comparison of the common English political attitudes towards Ireland in the first and the last quarters of the century. Under William was wrought the arrest of Irish industry and commerce, begun after the Restoration; under Anne were enacted the penal laws against Catholics—as signal an example of religious iniquity as can well be found in all history. By the middle of the century these laws had become anachronisms for all save bigots.

> "The wave of freethought that was spreading over Europe and permeating its literature had not failed to affect Ireland. .....An atmosphere of skepticism was fatal to the Penal Code. What element of religious persecution there had been in it had long ceased to be operative" (R. Dunlop, in *Camb. Mod. Hist.* vi, 489). Macaulay's testimony on this head is noteworthy: "The philosophy of the eighteenth century had purified English Whiggism of the deep taint of intolerance which had been contracted during a long and close alliance with the Puritanism of the eighteenth century" (*History*, ch. xvii, *end*).

The denunciations of the penal laws by Arthur Young in 1780[2] are the outcome of two generations of deistic thinking; the spirit of religion has been ousted by judgment.[3] Could that spirit have had freer play, less hindrance from blind passion, later history would have been a happier record. But for reasons lying in the environment as well as in its own standpoint, deism was not destined to rise on continuous stepping-stones to social dominion.

> Currency has been given to a misconception of intellectual history by the authoritative statement that in the deistic controversy "all that was intellectually venerable in England" appeared "on the side of Christianity" (Sir Leslie Stephen, *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, i, 86). The same thing, in effect, is said by Lecky: "It was to repel these [deistic] attacks ['upon the miracles'] that the evidential school arose, and the annals of religious controversy narrate few more complete victories than they achieved" (*Rise and Influence of Rationalism*, pop. ed. i, 175). The proposition seems to be an echo of orthodox

[1] Act 9th, Geo. II (1736), ch. 5. [2] *A Tour in Ireland*, ed. 1892, ii, 59–72.

[3] Young at this period was entirely secular in his thinking. Telling of his recovery from a fever in 1790, he writes: "I fear that not one thought of God ever occurred to me at that time" (*Autobiography*, 1898, p. 188). Afterwards he fell into religious melancholia (Introd. note of editor).

historiography, as Buckle had before written in his note-book: "In England skepticism made no head. Such men as Toland and Tindal, Collins, Shaftesbury, Woolston, were no match for Clarke, Warburton, and Lardner. They could make no head till the time of Middleton" (*Misc. Works*, abridged ed. i, 321)—a strain of assertion which clearly proceeds on no close study of the period. In the first place, all the writing on the freethinking side was done under peril of Blasphemy Laws, and under menace of all the calumny and ostracism that in Christian society follow on advanced heresy; while the orthodox side could draw on the entire clerical profession, over ten thousand strong, and trained for and pledged to defence of the faith. Yet, when all is said, the ordinary list of deists amply suffices to disprove Sir L. Stephen's phrase. His "intellectually venerable" list runs: Bentley, Locke, Berkeley, Clarke, Butler, Waterland, Warburton, Sherlock, Gibson, Conybeare, Smalbroke, Leslie, Law, Leland, Lardner, Foster, Doddridge, Lyttelton, Barrington, Addison, Pope, Swift. He might have added Newton and Boyle. Sykes,[1] Balguy, Stebbing, and a "host of others," he declares to be "now for the most part as much forgotten as their victims"; Young and Blackmore he admits to be in similar case. It is expressly told of Doddridge, he might have added, that whereas that well-meaning apologist put before his students at Northampton the ablest writings both for and against Christianity, leaving them to draw their own conclusions, many of his pupils, "on leaving his institution, became confirmed Arians and Socinians" (Nichols in App. P to Life of Arminius —*Works of Arminius*, 1825, i, 223–25). This hardly spells success.[2] All told, the list includes only three or four men of any permanent interest as thinkers, apart from Newton; and only three or four more important as writers. The description of Waterland,[3] Warburton,[4] Smalbroke,[5] Sherlock, Leslie, and half-a-dozen more as "intellectually venerable" is grotesque; even Bentley is a strange subject for veneration.

On the other hand, the list of "the despised deists," who "make but a poor show when compared with this imposing list," runs thus: Herbert, Hobbes, Blount, Halley (well known to be an unbeliever, though he did not write on the subject),

[1] Really an abler man than half the others in the list, but himself a good deal of a heretic. So far from attempting to make "victims," he pleaded for a more candid treatment of deistic objections.

[2] Doddridge himself was not theologically orthodox, but was an evangelical Christian. Dr. Stoughton, *Religion in England under Queen Anne and the Georges*, 1878, i, 344–46.

[3] Whose doctrine Sir Leslie Stephen elsewhere (p. 258) calls a "brutal theology which gloried in trampling on the best instincts of its opponents," and a "most unlovely product of eighteenth-century speculation."

[4] Of Warburton Sir Leslie writes elsewhere (p. 353) that "this colossus was built up of rubbish." See p. 352 for samples. Again he speaks (p. 368) of the bishop's pretensions as "colossal impudence." It should be noted, further, that Warburton's teaching in the *Divine Legation* was a gross heresy in the eyes of William Law, who in his *Short but Sufficient Confutation* pronounced its main thesis a "most horrible doctrine." Ed. 1768, as cited, i, 217.

[5] As to whose "senile incompetence" see same vol. p. 234.

Toland, Shaftesbury, Collins, Mandeville, Tindal, Chubb, Morgan, Dodwell, Middleton, Hume, Bolingbroke, Gibbon. It would be interesting to know on what principles this group is excluded from the intellectual veneration so liberally allotted to the other. It is nothing to the purpose that Shaftesbury and Mandeville wrote "covertly" and "indirectly." The law and the conditions compelled them to do so. It is still more beside the case to say that "Hume can scarcely be reckoned among the deists. He is already [when ?] emerging into a higher atmosphere." Hume wrote explicitly as a deist; and only in his posthumous Dialogues did he pass on to the atheistic position. At no time, moreover, was he "on the side of Christianity." On the other hand, Locke and Clarke and Pope were clearly "emerging into a higher atmosphere" than Christianity, since Locke is commonly reckoned by the culture-historians, and even by Sir Leslie Stephen, as making for deism; Pope was the pupil of Bolingbroke, and wrote as such; and Clarke was shunned as an Arian. Newton, again, was a Unitarian, and Leibnitz accused his system of making for irreligion. It would be hard to show, further, who are the "forgotten victims" of Balguy and the rest. Balguy criticized Shaftesbury, whose name is still a good deal better known than Balguy's. The main line of deists is pretty well remembered. And if we pair off Hume against Berkeley, Hobbes against Locke, Middleton (as historical critic) against Bentley, Shaftesbury against Addison, Mandeville against Swift, Bolingbroke against Butler, Collins against Clarke, Herbert against Lyttelton, Tindal against Waterland, and Gibbon against—shall we say?—Warburton, it hardly appears that the overplus of merit goes as Sir Leslie Stephen alleges, even if we leave Newton, with brain unhinged, standing against Halley. The statement that the deists "are but a ragged regiment," and that "in speculative ability most of them were children by the side of their ablest antagonists," is simply unintelligible unless the names of all the ablest deists are left out. Locke, be it remembered, did not live to meet the main deistic attack on Christianity; and Sir Leslie admits the weakness of his pro-Christian performance.

The bases of Sir Leslie Stephen's verdict may be tested by his remarks that "Collins, a *respectable country gentleman*, showed considerable acuteness; Toland, *a poor denizen of Grub Street*, and Tindal, a Fellow of All Souls, made a *certain* display of learning, and succeeded in planting some effective arguments." Elsewhere (pp. 217–227) Sir Leslie admits that Collins had the best of the argument against his "venerable" opponents on Prophecy; and Huxley credits him with equal success in the argument with Clarke. The work of Collins on *Human Liberty*, praised by a long series of students and experts, and entirely above the capacity of Bentley, is philosophically as durable as any portion of Locke, who made Collins his chosen friend and

trustee, and who did not live to meet his anti-Biblical arguments. Tindal, who had also won Locke's high praise by his political essays, profoundly influenced such a student as Laukhard (Lechler, p. 451). And Toland, whom even Mr. A. S. Farrar (Bampton Lectures, p. 179) admitted to possess "much originality and learning," has struck Lange as a notable thinker, though he *was* a poor man. Leibnitz, who answered him, praises his acuteness, as does Pusey, who further admits the uncommon ability of Morgan and Collins (*Histor. Enq. into German Rationalism*, 1828, p. 126). It is time that the conventional English standards in these matters should be abandoned by modern rationalists.

The unfortunate effect of Sir Leslie Stephen's dictum is seen in the assertion of Prof. Höffding (*Hist. of Modern Philos.* Eng. tr. 1900, i, 403), that Sir Leslie "rightly remarks of the English deists that they were altogether inferior to their adversaries"; and further (p. 405), that by the later deists, "Collins, Tindal, Morgan, etc., the dispute as to miracles was carried on with great violence." It is here evident that Prof. Höffding has not read the writers he depreciates, for those he names were far from being violent. Had he known the literature, he would have named Woolston, not Collins and Tindal and Morgan. He is merely echoing, without inquiring for himself, a judgment which he regards as authoritative. In the same passage he declares that "only one of all the men formerly known as the 'English deists' [Toland] has rendered contributions of any value to the history of thought." If this is said with a knowledge of the works of Collins, Shaftesbury, and Mandeville, it argues a sad lack of critical judgment. But there is reason to infer here also that Prof. Höffding writes in ignorance of the literature he discusses.

While some professed rationalists thus belittle a series of pioneers who did so much to make later rationalism possible, some eminent theologians do them justice. Thus does Prof. Cheyne begin his series of lectures on *Founders of Old Testament Criticism* (1893): "A well-known and honoured representative of progressive German orthodoxy (J. A. Dorner) has set a fine example of historical candour by admitting the obligations of his country to a much-disliked form of English heterodoxy. He says that English deism, which found so many apt disciples in Germany, 'by clearing away dead matter, prepared the way for a reconstruction of theology from the very depths of the heart's beliefs, and also subjected man's nature to stricter observation.'[1] This, however, as it appears to me, is a very inadequate description of the facts. It was not merely a new

[1] *History of Protestant Theology*, Eng. tr. ii, 77. For the influence of deism on Germany, see Tholuck (*Vermischte Schriften*, Bd. ii) and Lechler (*Gesch. des englischen Deismus*).—*Note by Dr. Cheyne.*

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constructive stage of German theoretic theology, and a keener psychological investigation, for which deism helped to prepare the way, but also a great movement, which has in our own day become in a strict sense international, concerned with the literary and historical criticism of the Scriptures. Beyond all doubt, the Biblical discussions which abound in the works of the deists and their opponents contributed in no slight degree to the development of that semi-apologetic criticism of the Old Testament of which J. D. Michaelis, and in some degree even Eichhorn, were leading representatives.....It is indeed singular that deism should have passed away in England without having produced a great critical movement among ourselves." Not quite so singular, perhaps, when we note that in our own day Sir Leslie Stephen and Lecky and Prof. Höffding could sum up the work of the deists without a glance at what it meant for Biblical criticism.

§ 8

If we were to set up a theory of intellectual possibilities from what has actually taken place in the history of thought, and without regard to the economic and political conditions above mentioned, we might reason that deism failed permanently to overthrow the current creed because it was not properly preceded by discipline in natural science. There might well be stagnation in the higher criticism of the Hebrew Scriptures when all natural science was still coloured by them. In nothing, perhaps, is the danger of Sacred Books more fully exemplified than in their influence for the suppression of true scientific thought. A hundredfold more potently than the faiths of ancient Greece has that of Christendom blocked the way to all intellectually vital discovery. If even the fame and the pietism of Newton could not save him from the charge of promoting atheism, much less could obscure men hope to set up any view of natural things which clashed with pulpit prejudice. But the harm lay deeper, inasmuch as the ground was preoccupied by pseudo-scientific theories which were at best fanciful modifications of the myths of Genesis. Types of these performances are the treatise of Sir Matthew Hale on *The Primitive Origination of Mankind* (1685); Dr. Thomas Burnet's *Sacred Theory of the Earth* (1680–1689); and Whiston's *New Theory of the Earth* (1696)—all devoid of scientific value; Hale's work being pre-Newtonian; Burnet's anti-Newtonian, though partly critical as regards the sources of the Pentateuch; and Whiston's a combination of Newton and myth with his own quaint speculations. Even the *Natural History of the Earth* of Prof. John Woodward (1695), after

recognizing that fossils were really prehistoric remains, decided that they were deposited by the Deluge.[1]

Woodward's book is in its own way instructive as regards the history of opinion. A "Professor of Physick" in Gresham College, F.C.P., and F.R.S., he goes about his work in a methodical and ostensibly scientific fashion, colligates the phenomena, examines temperately the hypotheses of the many previous inquirers, and shows no violence of orthodox prepossession. He claims to have considered Moses "only as an historian," and to give him credit finally because he finds his narrative "punctually true."[2] He had before him an abundance of facts irreconcilable with the explanation offered by the Flood story; yet he actually adds to that myth a thesis of universal decomposition and dissolution of the earth's strata by the flood's action[3]—a hypothesis far more extravagant than any of those he dismissed. With all his method and scrutiny he had remained possessed by the tradition, and could not cast it off. It would seem as if such a book, reducing the tradition to an absurdity, was bound at least to put its more thoughtful readers on the right track. But the legend remained in possession of the general intelligence as of Woodward's; and beyond his standpoint science made little advance for many years. Moral and historical criticism, then, as regards some main issues, had gone further than scientific; and men's thinking on certain problems of cosmic philosophy was thus arrested for lack of due basis or discipline in experiential science.

The final account of the arrest of exact Biblical criticism in the eighteenth century, however, is that which explains also the arrest of the sciences. English energy, broadly speaking, was diverted into other channels. In the age of Chatham it became more and more military and industrial, imperialist and commercial; and the scientific work of Newton was considerably less developed by English hands than was the critical work of the first deists. Long before the French Revolution, mathematical and astronomical science were being advanced by French minds, the English doing nothing. Lagrange and Euler, Clairaut and D'Alembert, carried on the task, till Laplace consummated it in his great theory, which is to Newton's what Newton's was to that of Copernicus. It was Frenchmen, freethinkers to a man, who built up the new astronomy, while England was producing only eulogies of Newton's greatness. "No British name is ever mentioned in the list of mathematicians

[1] *An Essay towards a Natural History of the Earth*, 3rd ed. 1723, pref. and pp. 16 *sq.*, 77 *sq.* Cp. White, *Warfare of Science with Theology*, i, 227.
[2] End of pref.
[3] Work cited, p. 85.

who followed Newton in his brilliant career and completed the magnificent edifice of which he laid the foundation."[1] "Scotland contributed her Maclaurin, but England no European name."[2] Throughout the latter half of the eighteenth century "there was hardly an individual in this country who possessed an intimate acquaintance with the methods of investigation which had conducted the foreign mathematicians to so many sublime results."[3] "The English mathematicians seem to have been so dazzled with the splendour of Newton's discoveries that they never conceived them capable of being extended or improved upon";[4] and Newton's name was all the while vaunted, unwarrantably enough, as being on the side of Christian orthodoxy. Halley's great hypothesis of the motion of the solar system in space, put forward in 1718, borne out by Cassini and Le Monnier, was left to be established by Mayer of Göttingen.[5] There was nothing specially incidental to deism, then, in the non-development of the higher criticism in England after Collins and Parvish, or in the lull of critical speculation in the latter half of the century. It was part of a general social readjustment in which English attention was turned from the mental life to the physical, from intension of thought to extension of empire.

Playfair (as cited, p. 39; Brewster, *Memoirs of Newton*, i, 348, *note*) puts forward the theory that the progress of the higher science in France was due to the "small pensions and great honours" bestowed on scientific men by the Academy of Sciences. The lack of such an institution in England he traces to "mercantile prejudices," without explaining these in their turn. They are to be understood as the consequences of the special expansion of commercial and industrial life in England in the eighteenth century, when France, on the contrary, losing India and North America, had her energies in a proportional degree thrown back on the life of the mind. French freethought, it will be observed, expanded *with* science, while in England there occurred, not a spontaneous reversion to orthodoxy any more than a surrender of the doctrine of Newton, but a general turning of attention in other directions. It is significant that the most important names in the literature of deism after 1740 are those of Hume and Smith, late products of the intellectual atmosphere of pre-industrial Scotland; of Bolingbroke, an aristocrat of the deistic generation, long an exile in France, who left his works to be published after his death; and of Gibbon, who also breathed the intellectual air of France.

[1] Playfair, in the *Edinburgh Review*, January, 1808, cited by Brewster, *Memoirs of Newton*, 1855, i, 347.
[2] Brewster, as last cited.
[3] Grant, *History of Physical Astronomy*, 1852, p. 108.
[4] Baden Powell, *Hist. of Nat. Philos.* 1834, p. 363.
[5] Brewster, *More Worlds than One*, 1854, p. 111.

§ 9

It has been commonly assumed that after Chubb and Morgan the deistic movement in England "decayed," or "passed into skepticism" with Hume; and that the decay was mainly owing to the persuasive effect of Bishop Butler's *Analogy* (1736).[1] This appears to be a complete misconception, arising out of the habit of looking to the mere succession of books without considering their vogue and the accompanying social conditions. Butler's book had very little influence till long after his death,[2] being indeed very ill-fitted to turn contemporary deists to Christianity. It does but develop one form of the skeptical argument for faith, as Berkeley had developed another; and that form of reasoning never does attain to anything better than a success of despair. The main argument being that natural religion is open to the same objections as revealed, on the score (1) of the inconsistency of Nature with divine benevolence, and (2) that we must be guided in opinion as in conduct by probability, a Mohammedan could as well use the theorem for the Koran as could a Christian for the Bible; and the argument against the justice of Nature tended logically to atheism. But the deists had left to them the resource of our modern theists—that of surmising a beneficence above human comprehension; and it is clear that if Butler made any converts they must have been of a very unenthusiastic kind. It is therefore safe to say with Pattison that "To whatever causes is to be attributed the decline of deism from 1750 onwards, the books polemically written against it cannot be reckoned among them."[3]

On the other hand, even deists who were affected by the plea that the Bible need not be more consistent and satisfactory than Nature, could find refuge in Unitarianism, a creed which, as industriously propounded by Priestley[4] towards the end of the century, made a numerical progress out of all proportion to that of orthodoxy. The argument of William Law,[5] again, which insisted on the irreconcilability of the course of things with human reason, and called for

[1] Sir James Stephen, *Horæ Sabbaticæ*, ii, 281; Lechler, p. 451.
[2] See details in *Dynamics of Religion*, ch. viii.
[3] Essay on "Tendencies of Religious Thought in England: 1688-1750," in *Essays and Reviews*, 9th ed. p. 304.
[4] In criticizing whom Sir Leslie Stephen barely notices his scientific work, but dwells much on his religious fallacies—a course which would make short work of the fame of Newton.
[5] In his *Case of Reason; or, Natural Religion Fully and Fairly Stated*, in answer to Tindal (1732). See the argument set forth by Sir Leslie Stephen, i, 158-63. It is noteworthy, however, that in his *Spirit of Prayer* (1750), pt. ii, dial. i, Law expressly argues that "No other religion can be right but that which has its foundation in Nature. For the God of Nature can require nothing of his creatures but what the state of their nature calls them to." Like Baxter, Berkeley, Butler, and so many other orthodox polemists, Law uses the argument from ignorance when it suits him, and ignores or rejects it when used by others.

an abject submission to revelation, could appeal only to minds already thus prostrate. Both his and Butler's methods, in fact, prepared the way for HUME. And in the year 1741, five years after the issue of the *Analogy* and seven before the issue of Hume's *Essay on Miracles*, we find the thesis of that essay tersely affirmed in a note to Book II of an anonymous translation (ascribed to T. FRANCKLIN) of Cicero's *De Natura Deorum*.

> The passage is worth comparing with Hume: "Hence we see what little credit ought to be paid to facts said to be done out of the ordinary course of nature. These miracles [cutting the whetstone, etc., related by Cicero, *De Div.* i, c. xvii] are well attested. They were recorded in the annals of a great people, believed by many learned and otherwise sagacious persons, and received as religious truths by the populace; but the testimonies of ancient records, the credulity of some learned men, and the implicit faith of the vulgar, can never prove that to have been, which is impossible in the nature of things ever to be." *M. Tullius Cicero Of the Nature of the Gods*.....with Notes, London, 1741, p. 85. It does not appear to have been noted that in regard to this as to another of his best-known theses, Hume develops a proposition laid down before him.

What Hume did was to elaborate the skeptical argument with a power and fullness which forced attention once for all, alike in England and on the Continent. It is not to be supposed, however, that Hume's philosophy, insofar as it was strictly skeptical—that is, suspensory—drew away deists from their former attitude of confidence to one of absolute doubt. Nor did Hume ever aim at such a result. What he did was to countermine the mines of Berkeley and others, who, finding their supra-rational dogmas set aside by rationalism, deistic or atheistic, sought to discredit at once deistic and atheistic philosophies based on study of the external world, and to establish their creed anew on the basis of their subjective consciousness. As against that method, Hume showed the futility of all apriorism alike, destroying the sham skepticism of the Christian theists by forcing their method to its conclusions. If the universe was to be reduced to a mere contingent of consciousness, he calmly showed, consciousness itself was as easily reducible, on the same principles, to a mere series of states. Idealistic skepticism, having disposed of the universe, must make short work of the hypostatized process of perception. Hume, knowing that strict skepticism is practically null in life, counted on leaving the ground cleared for experiential rationalism. And he did, insofar as he was read. His essay, *Of Miracles* (with the rest of the *Inquiries* of 1748–1751,

which recast his early *Treatise of Human Nature*, 1739), posits a principle valid against all supernaturalism whatever; while his *Natural History of Religion* (1757), though affirming deism, rejected the theory of a primordial monotheism, and laid the basis of the science of Comparative Hierology.[1] Finally, his posthumous *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (1779) admit, though indirectly, the untenableness of deism, and fall back decisively upon the atheistic or agnostic position.[2] Like Descartes, he lacked the heroic fibre; but like him he recast philosophy for modern Europe; and its subsequent course is but a development of or a reaction against his work.

§ 10

It is remarkable that this development of opinion took place in that part of the British Islands where religious fanaticism had gone furthest, and speech and thought were socially least free. Freethought in Scotland before the middle of the seventeenth century can have existed only as a thing furtive and accursed; and though, as we have seen from the *Religio Stoici* of Sir George Mackenzie, unbelief had emerged in some abundance at or before the Restoration, only wealthy men could dare openly to avow their deism.[3] Early in 1697 the clergy had actually succeeded in getting a lad of eighteen, Thomas Aikenhead, hanged for professing deism in general, and in particular for calling the Old Testament "Ezra's Fables," ridiculing the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation, and expressing the hope and belief that Christianity would be extinct within a century.[4] The spirit of the prosecution may be gathered from the facts that the boy broke down and pleaded penitence,[5] and that the statute enacted the capital penalty only for obstinately persisting in the denial of any of the persons of the Trinity.[6] He had talked reck-

[1] The general reader should take note that in A. Murray's issue of Hume's Essays (afterwards published by Ward, Lock, and Co.), which omits altogether the essays on Miracles and a Future State, the *Natural History of Religion* is much mutilated, though the book professes to be a verbatim reprint.

[2] Even before his death he was suspected of that view. When his coffin was being carried from his house for interment, one of "the refuse of the rabble" is said to have remarked, "Ah, he was an atheist." "No matter," replied another, "he was an honest man" (*Curious Particulars, etc., respecting Chesterfield and Hume*, 1788, p. 15).

[3] See Burton, *Hist. of Scotland*, viii, 549–50, as to the case of Pitcairne.

[4] Howell's *State Trials*, xiii (1812), coll. 917–38.

[5] Macaulay, *History*, ch. xxii; student's ed. ii, 620–21; Burton, *History of Scotland*, viii, 76–77. Aikenhead seems to have been a boy of unusual if unbalanced capacity, even by the bullying account of Macaulay, who missed no opportunity to cover himself by stoning heretics. See the boy's arguments on the bases of ethics, set forth in his "dying speech," as cited by Halyburton, *Natural Religion Insufficient*, 1714, pp. 119–23, 131, and the version in the *State Trials*, xiii, 930–34.

[6] Macaulay ascribes the savagery of the prosecution to the Lord Advocate, Sir James Stewart, "as cruel as he was base"; but a letter printed in the *State Trials*, from a member of the Privy Council, says the sentence would have been commuted if "the ministers would intercede." They, however, "spoke and preached for cutting him off." *Trials*, xiii, 930; Burton, viii, 77.

lessly against the current creed among youths about his own age, one of whom was in Locke's opinion "the decoy who gave him the books and made him speak as he did."[1] It would appear that a victim was very much wanted; and Aikenhead was not allowed the help of a counsel. It is characteristic of the deadening effect of dogmatic religion on the heart that an act of such brutish cruelty elicited no cry of horror from any Christian writer. At this date the clergy were hounding on the Privy Council to new activity in trying witches; and all works of supposed heretical tendency imported from England were confiscated in the Edinburgh shops, among them being Thomas Burnet's *Sacred Theory of the Earth*.[2] Scottish intellectual development had in fact been arrested by the Reformation, so that, save for Napier's *Logarithms* (1614) and such a political treatise as Rutherford's *Lex Rex* (1644), the nation of Dunbar and Lyndsay produced for two centuries no secular literature of the least value, and not even a theology of any enduring interest. Deism, accordingly, seems in the latter half of the seventeenth and the early part of the eighteenth century to have made fully as much progress in Scotland as in England; and the bigoted clergy could offer little intellectual resistance.

As early as 1696 the Scottish General Assembly, with theological candour, passed an Act "against the Atheistical opinions of the Deists." (*Abridgment of the Acts of the General Assemblies*, 1721, pp. 16, 76; Cunningham, *Hist. of the Ch. of Scotland*, ii, 313.) The opinions specified were "The denying of all revealed religion, the grand mysteries of the gospels.....the resurrection of the dead, and, in a word, the certainty and authority of Scripture revelation; as also, their asserting that there must be a mathematical evidence for each purpose.....and that Natural Light is sufficient to Salvation." All this is deism, pure and simple. But Sir W. Anstruther (a judge in the Court of Session), in the preface to his *Essays Moral and Divine*, Edinburgh, 1710, speaks of "the spreading contagion of *atheism*, which threatens the ruin of our excellent and holy religion." To atheism he devotes two essays; and neither in these nor in one on the Incarnation does he discuss deism, the arguments he handles being really atheistic. Scottish free-thought would seem thus to have gone further than English at the period in question.

As to the prevalence of deism, however, see the posthumous work of Prof. Halyburton, of St. Andrews, *Natural Religion*

[1] Letter to Sir Francis Masham, printed in the *State Trials*, xiii, 928-29—evidently written by Locke, who seems to have preserved all the papers printed by Howell.

[2] Macaulay, as cited. In 1681 one Francis Borthwick, who had gone abroad at the age of fourteen and turned Jew, was accused of blaspheming Jesus, and had to fly for his life, being outlawed. *State Trials*, as cited, col. 939.

Insufficient (Edinburgh, 1714), Epist. of Recom.; pref. pp. 25, 27, and pp. 8, 15, 19, 23, 31, etc. Halyburton's treatise is interesting as showing the psychological state of argumentative Scotch orthodoxy in his day. He professes to repel the deistical argument throughout by reason; he follows Huet, and concurs with Berkeley in contending that mathematics involves anti-rational assumptions; and he takes entire satisfaction in the execution of the lad Aikenhead for deism. Yet in a second treatise, *An Essay Concerning the Nature of Faith*, he contends, as against Locke and the "Rationalists," that the power to believe in the word of God is "expressly deny'd to man in his natural estate," and is a supernatural gift. Thus the Calvinists, like Baxter, were at bottom absolutely insincere in their profession to act upon reason, while insolently charging insincerity on others.

Even apart from deism there had arisen a widespread aversion to dogmatic theology and formal creeds, so that an apologist of 1715 speaks of his day as "a time when creeds and Confessions of Faith are so generally decried, and not only exposed to contempt, as useless inventions.....but are loaded by many writers of distinguished wit and learning with the most fatal and dangerous consequences."[1] This writer admits the intense bitterness of the theological disputes of the time;[2] and he speaks, on the other hand, of seeing "the most sacred mysteries of godliness impudently denied and impugned" by some, while the "distinguishing doctrines of Christianity are by others treacherously undermined, subtilized into an airy phantom, or at least doubted, if not disclaimed."[3] His references are probably to works published in England, notably those of Locke, Toland, Shaftesbury, and Collins, since in Scotland no such literature could then be published; but he doubtless has an eye to Scottish opinion.

While, however, the rationalism of the time could not take book form, there are clear traces of its existence among educated men, even apart from the general complaints of the apologists. Thus the Professor of Medicine at Glasgow University in the opening years of the eighteenth century, John Johnston, was a known freethinker.[4] In the way of moderate or Christian rationalism, the teaching of the prosecuted Simson seems to have counted for something, seeing that Francis Hutcheson at least imbibed from him "liberal" views about future punishment and the salvation of the heathen, which

[1] *A Full Account of the Several Ends and Uses of Confessions of Faith*, first published in 1719 as a preface to a Collection of Confessions of Faith, by Prof. W. Dunbar, of Edinburgh University, 3rd ed. 1775, p. 1.

[2] Work cited, p. 48.

[3] *Id.* p. 198.

[4] *Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century.* From the MSS. of John Ramsay, of Ochtertyre, 1888. i, 277. Ramsay describes Johnston as a "joyous, manly, honourable man," of whom Kames "was exceedingly fond" (p. 278).

gave much offence in the Presbyterian pulpit in Ulster.[1] And Hutcheson's later vindication of the ethical system of Shaftesbury in his *Inquiry Concerning the Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725) must have tended to attract attention in Scotland to the *Characteristics* after his instalment as a Professor at Glasgow. In an English pamphlet, in 1732, he was satirized as introducing Shaftesbury's system into a University,[2] and it was from the Shaftesbury camp that the first literary expression of freethought in Scotland was sent forth. A young Scotch deist of that school, William Dudgeon, published in 1732 a dialogue entitled *The State of the Moral World Considered*, wherein the optimistic position was taken up with uncommon explicitness; and in 1739 the same writer printed *A Catechism Founded upon Experience and Reason*, prefaced by an Introductory Letter on Natural Religion, which takes a distinctly anti-clerical attitude. The *Catechism* answers to its title, save insofar as it is à priori in its theism and optimistic in its ethic, as is another work of its author in the same year, *A View of the Necessarian or Best Scheme*, defending the Shaftesburyan doctrine against the criticism of Crousaz on Pope's *Essay*. Still more heterodox is his little volume of *Philosophical Letters Concerning the Being and Attributes of God* (1737), where the doctrine goes far towards pantheism. All this propaganda seems to have elicited only one printed reply—an attack on his first treatise in 1732. In the letter prefaced to his *Catechism*, however, he tells that "the bare suspicion of my not believing the opinions in fashion in our country hath already caused me sufficient trouble."[3] His case had in fact been raised in the Church courts, the proceedings going through many stages in the years 1732–36; but in the end no decision was taken,[4] and the special stress of his rationalism in 1739 doubtless owes something alike to the prosecution and to its collapse. Despite such hostility, he must privately have had fair support.[5]

The prosecution of Hutcheson before the Glasgow Presbytery in 1738 reveals vividly the theological temper of the time. He was indicted for teaching to his students "the following two false and dangerous doctrines: first, that the standard of moral goodness was the promotion of the happiness of others; and, second, that we could

[1] W. R. Scott, *Francis Hutcheson*, 1900, pp. 15, 20–21. [2] *Id.* p. 52.
[3] Cp. Alberti, *Briefe betreffende den Zustand der Religion in Gross-Brittannien*, 1752, pp. 430–31.
[4] See Dr. McCosh's *Scottish Philosophy*, 1875, pp. 111–13. Dr. McCosh notes that at some points Dudgeon anticipated Hume.
[5] Dr. McCosh, however, admits that the absence of the printer's name on the 1765 edition of Dudgeon's works shows that there was then no thorough freedom of thought in Scotland.

have a knowledge of good and evil without and prior to a knowledge of God."[1] There has been a natural disposition on the orthodox side to suppress the fact that such teachings were ever ecclesiastically denounced as false, dangerous, and irreligious; and the prosecution seems to have had no effect beyond intensifying the devotion of Hutcheson's students. Among them was Adam Smith, of whom it has justly been said that, "if he was any man's disciple, he was Hutcheson's," inasmuch as he derived from his teacher the bases alike of his moral and political philosophy and of his deistic optimism.[2] Another prosecution soon afterwards showed that the new influences were vitally affecting thought within the Church itself. Hutcheson's friend Leechman, whom he and his party contrived to elect as professor of theology in Glasgow University, was in turn proceeded against (1743–44) for a sermon on Prayer, which Hutcheson and his sympathizers pronounced "noble,"[3] but which "resolved the efficacy of prayer into its reflex influence on the mind of the worshipper"[4]—a theorem which has chronically made its appearance in the Scottish Church ever since, still ranking as a heresy, after having brought a clerical prosecution in the last century on at least one divine, Prof. William Knight, and rousing a scandal against another, the late Dr. Robert Wallace.[5]

Leechman in turn held his ground, and later became Principal of his University; but still the orthodox in Scotland fought bitterly against every semblance of rationalism. Even the anti-deistic essays of Lord-President Forbes of Culloden, head of the Court of Session, when collected[6] and posthumously published, were offensive to the Church as laying undue stress on reason; as accepting the heterodox Biblical theories of Dr. John Hutchinson; and as making the awkward admission that "the freethinkers, with all their perversity, generally are sensible of the social duties, and act up to them better than others do who in other respects think more justly than they."[7] Such an utterance from such a dignitary told of a profound change; and, largely through the influence of Hutcheson and Leechman on

[1] Rae, *Life of Adam Smith*, 1895, p. 13. Prof. Fowler shows no knowledge of this prosecution in his monograph on Hutcheson (*Shaftesbury and Hutcheson*, 1882); and Mr. W. R. Scott, in his, seems to rely for the wording of the indictment solely on Mr. Rae, who gives no references, drawing apparently on unpublished MSS.

[2] Rae, as cited, pp. 11–15.

[3] Scott, as cited, p. 87.

[4] Dr. James Orr, *David Hume and his Influence*, etc., 1903, pp. 36–37.

[5] Also for a time a theological professor in Edinburgh University.

[6] The *Thoughts Concerning Religion, Natural and Revealed*, appeared in 1735; the *Letter to a Bishop* in 1732; and the *Reflections on the Sources of Incredulity* (left unfinished) posthumously about 1750. Forbes in his youth had been famed as one of the hardest drinkers of his day.

[7] *Reflections on Incredulity*, in *Works*, undated, ii, 141–42. Yet the works of Forbes were translated for orthodox purposes into German, and later into French by Père Houbigant (1769), who preserves the passage on freethinkers' morals, though curtailing the *Reflections* as a whole.

a generation of students, the educated Scotland of the latter half of the eighteenth century was in large part either "Moderate" or deistic. After generations of barren controversy,[1] the very aridity of the Presbyterian life intensified the recoil among the educated classes to philosophical and historical interests, leading to the performances of Hume, Smith, Robertson, Millar, Ferguson, and yet others, all rationalists in method and sociologists in their interests.

Of these, Millar, one of Smith's favourite pupils, and a table-talker of "magical vivacity,"[2] was known to be rationalistic in a high degree;[3] while Smith and Ferguson were certainly deists, as was Henry Home (the judge, Lord Kames), who had the distinction of being attacked along with his friend Hume in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1755–56. Home wrote expressly to controvert Hume, alike as to utilitarianism and the idea of causation; but his book, *Essays on Morality and Natural Religion* (published anonymously, 1751), handled the thorny question of free-will in such fashion as to give no less offence than Hume had done; and the orthodox bracketed him with the subject of his criticism. His doctrine was indeed singular, its purport being that there can be no free-will, but that the deity has for wise purposes implanted in men the feeling that their wills are free. The fact of his having been made a judge of the Court of Session since writing his book had probably something to do with the rejection of the whole subject by the General Assembly, and afterwards by the Edinburgh Presbytery; but there had evidently arisen a certain diffidence in the Church, which would be assiduously promoted by "moderates" such as Principal Robertson, the historian. It is noteworthy that, while Home and Hume thus escaped, the other Home, John, who wrote the then admired tragedy of *Douglas*, was soon after forced to resign his position as a minister of the Church for that authorship, deism having apparently more friends in the fold than drama.[4] While the theatre was thus being treated as a place of sin, many of the churches in Scotland were the scenes of repeated Sunday riots. A new manner of psalm-singing had been introduced, and it frequently happened that the congregations divided into two parties, each singing in its own way, till they came to blows. According to one of Hume's biographers, unbelievers were at this

[1] As to which see *A Sober Enquiry into the Grounds of the Present Differences in the Church of Scotland*, 1723. [2] Cockburn's *Life of Jeffrey*, ed. 1872, p. 10.
[3] See the *Autobiography of the Rev. Dr. A. Carlyle*, 1860, pp. 492–93. Millar's *Historical View of the English Government* (censured by Hallam) was once much esteemed; and his *Origin of Ranks* is still worth the attention of sociologists.
[4] Ritchie's *Life of Hume*, 1807, pp. 52–81; Tytler's *Life of Lord Kames*, 2nd ed. 1814, i, ch. v; Burton's *Life of Hume*, i, 425–30.

period wont to go to church to see the fun.[1] Naturally orthodoxy did not gain ground.

In the case of Adam Smith we have one of the leading instances of the divorce between culture and creed in the Scotland of that age. His intellectual tendencies, primed by Hutcheson, were already revealing themselves when, seeking for something worth study in the unstudious Oxford of his day, he was found by some suspicious supervisor reading Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature*. The book was seized and the student scolded.[2] When, in 1751, he became Professor of Moral Philosophy in Glasgow University, he aroused orthodox comment by abandoning the Sunday class on Christian Evidences set up by Hutcheson, and still further, it is said, by petitioning the Senatus to be allowed to be relieved of the duty of opening his class with prayer.[3] The permission was not given; and the compulsory prayers were "thought to savour strongly of natural religion"; while the lectures on Natural Theology, which were part of the work of the chair, were said to lead "presumptuous striplings" to hold that "the great truths of theology, together with the duties which man owes to God and his neighbours, may be discovered by the light of nature without any special revelation."[4] Smith was thus well founded in rationalism before he became personally acquainted with Voltaire and the other French freethinkers; and the pious contemporary who deplores his associations avows that neither before nor after his French tour was his religious creed ever "properly ascertained."[5] It is clear, however, that it steadily developed in a rationalistic direction. In the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) the prevailing vein of theistic optimism is sufficiently uncritical; but even there there emerges an apparent doubt on the doctrine of a future state, and positive hostility to certain ecclesiastical forms of it.[6] In the sixth edition, which he prepared for the press in 1790, he deleted the passage which pronounced the doctrine of the Atonement to be in harmony with natural ethics.[7] But most noteworthy of all is his handling of the question of religious establishments in the *Wealth of Nations*.[8] It is so completely naturalistic that only the habit of taking the

[1] Ritchie, as cited, p. 57.
[2] McCulloch, *Life of Smith* prefixed to ed. of *Wealth of Nations*, ed. 1839, p. ii.
[3] Ramsay of Ochtertyre, *Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century*, 1888, i, 462-63. Mr. Rae doubts the story, *Life of Adam Smith*, 1895, p. 60.
[4] Ramsay, as last cited. [5] Ramsay, passage cited.
[6] *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, pt. iii, ch. ii, *end*.
[7] Cp. Rae, pp. 427-30. Mr. Rae thinks the deletion stood for no change of opinion, and cites Smith's own private explanation (Sinclair's *Life of Sir John Sinclair*, i, 40) that he thought the passage "unnecessary and misplaced." But this expression must be read in the light of Smith's general reticence concerning established dogmas. Certainly he adhered to his argument—which does not claim to be a demonstration—for the doctrine of a future state. [8] Bk. v, ch. i, pt. iii, art. 3.

Christian religion for granted could make men miss seeing that its account of the conditions of the rise of new cults applied to that in its origin no less than to the rise of any of its sects. As a whole, the argument might form part of Gibbon's fifteenth chapter. And even allowing for the slowness of the average believer to see the application of a general sociological law to his own system, there must be inferred a great change in the intellectual climate of Scottish life before we can account for Smith's general popularity at home as well as abroad after his handling of "enthusiasm and superstition" in the *Wealth of Nations*. The fact stands out that the two most eminent thinkers in Scotland in the latter half of the eighteenth century were non-Christians,[1] and that their most intellectual associates were in general sympathy with them.

§ 11

In Ireland, at least in Dublin, during the earlier part of the century, there occurred, on a smaller scale, a similar movement of rationalism, also largely associated with Shaftesbury. In Dublin towards the close of the seventeenth century we have seen Molyneux, the friend and correspondent of Locke, interested in "freethought," albeit much scared by the imprudence of Toland. At the same period there germinated a growth of Unitarianism, which was even more fiercely persecuted than that of Toland's deism. The Rev. Thomas Emlyn, an Englishman, co-pastor of the Protestant Dissenting Congregation of Wood Street (now Strand Street), Dublin, was found by a Presbyterian and a Baptist to be heretical on the subject of the Trinity, and was indicted in 1702 for blasphemy. He was sentenced to two years' imprisonment and a fine of £1,000, which was partly commuted on his release. He protested that South and Sherlock and other writers on the Trinitarian controversy might have been as justly prosecuted as he; but Irish Protestant orthodoxy was of a keener scent than English, and Emlyn was fain, when released, to return to his native land.[2] His colleague Boyse, like many other Churchmen, wished that the unhappy trinitarian controversy "were buried in silence," but was careful to conform doctrinally. More advanced thinkers

[1] Smith's admiration for Voltaire might alone indicate his mental attitude. As to that see F. W. Hirst, *Adam Smith* (Eng. Men of Letters ser.), pp. 127–28. But the assertion of Skarzinski, that Smith, after being an Idealist under the influence of *Hume*, "returned a materialist" from his intercourse with Voltaire and other French freethinkers, is an exhibition of learned ignorance. See Hirst, p. 181.

[2] *An Explanation and Defence of the Principles of Protestant Dissent*, by the Rev. Dr. W. Hamilton Drummond, 1842, pp. 5–6, 47; Skeats, *Hist. of the Free Churches of England*, ed. Miall, pp. 238–39; Wallace, *Anti-Trinitarian Biography*, iii, art. 360.

had double reason to be reticent. As usual, however, persecution provoked the growth it sought to stifle; and after the passing of the Irish Toleration Act of 1719, a more liberal measure than the English, there developed in Ulster, and even in Dublin, a Unitarian movement akin to that proceeding in England.[1] In the next generation we find in the same city a coterie of Shaftesburyans, centring around Lord Molesworth, the friend of Hutcheson, a man of affairs devoted to intellectual interests. It was within a few years of his meeting Molesworth that Hutcheson produced his *Inquiry*, championing Shaftesbury's ideas;[2] and other literary men were similarly influenced. It is even suggested that Hutcheson's clerical friend Synge, whom we have seen[3] in 1713 attempting a ratiocinative answer to the unbelief he declared to be abundant around him, was not only influenced by Shaftesbury through Molesworth, but latterly "avoided publication lest his opinions should prejudice his career in the Church."[4] After the death of Molesworth, in 1725, the movement he set up seems to have languished;[5] but, as we have seen, there were among the Irish bishops men given to philosophic controversy, and the influence of Berkeley cannot have been wholly obscurantist. When in 1756 we read of the Arian Bishop Clayton[6] proposing in the Irish House of Lords to drop the Nicene and Athanasian creeds, we realize that in Ireland thought was far from stagnant. The heretic bishop, however, died (February, 1758) just as he was about to be prosecuted for the anti-Athanasian heresies of his last book; and thenceforth Ireland plays no noticeable part in the development of rationalism, political interests soon taking the place of religious, with the result that orthodoxy recovered ground.

It cannot be doubted that the spectacle of religious wickedness presented by the operation of the odious penal laws against Catholics,

[1] Cp. Drummond, as cited, pp. 29–30; *History, Opinions, etc., of the English Presbyterians*, 1834, p. 29.

[2] W. R. Scott, *Francis Hutcheson*, p. 31.

[3] Above, p. 154, *note*.

[4] Scott, pp. 28–29, 35–36. The suggestion is not quite convincing. Synge, after becoming Archbishop of Tuam, continued to publish his propagandist tracts, among them *An Essay towards making the Knowledge of Religion Easy to the Meanest Capacity* (6th ed. 1734), which is quite orthodox, and which argues (p. 3) that the doctrine of the Trinity is to be believed, and not pried into, "because it is above our understanding to comprehend." All the while there was being sold also his early treatise, "*A Gentleman's Religion: in Three Parts*.....with an Appendix, wherein it is proved that nothing contrary to our Reason can possibly be the object of our belief, but that it is no just exception against some of the doctrines of Christianity that they are above our reason."

[5] Scott, p. 36.

[6] All that is told of this prelate by Lecky (*Hist. of Ireland in the 18th Cent.* 1892, i, 207) is that at Killala he patronized horse-races. He was industrious on more episcopal lines. He wrote an *Introduction to the History of the Jews*; a *Vindication of Biblical Chronology*; two treatises on prophecy; an anti-Athanasian *Essay on Spirit* (1751), which aroused much controversy; *A Vindication of the Histories of the Old and New Testament*, in answer to Bolingbroke (2 vols. 1752–1754; 2nd ed. 1757; rep. with the *Essay on Spirit*, Dublin, 1759), which led to his being prosecuted; and other works. The offence given by the *Vindication* lay in his denunciation of the Athanasian creed, and of the bigotry of those who supported it. See pt. iii, letters i and ii. The *Essay on Spirit* is no less heterodox. In other respects, however, Clayton is ultra-orthodox.

and the temper of the Protestant Ascendancy party in religious matters, had bred rational skepticism in Ireland in the usual way. Molesworth stands out in Irish history as a founder of a new and saner patriotism; and his doctrines would specially appeal to men of a secular and critical way of thinking. Heretical bishops imply heretical laymen. But the environment was unpropitious to dispassionate thinking. The very relaxation of the Penal Code favoured a reversion to "moderate" orthodoxy; and the new political strifes of the last quarter of the century, destined as they were to be reopened in the next, determined the course of Irish culture in another way.

§ 12

In England, meanwhile, there was beginning the redistribution of energies which can be seen to have prepared for the intellectual and political reaction of the end of the century. There had been no such victory of faith as is supposed to have been wrought by the forensic theorem of Butler. An orthodox German observer, making a close inquest about 1750, cites the *British Magazine* as stating in 1749 that half the educated people were then deists; and he, after full inquiry, agrees.[1] In the same year, Richardson speaks tragically in the Postscriptum to *Clarissa* of seeing "skepticism and infidelity openly avowed, and *even* endeavoured to be propagated from the press; the great doctrines of the gospel brought into question"; and he describes himself as "seeking to steal in with a disguised plea for religion." Instead of being destroyed by the clerical defence, the deistic movement had really penetrated the Church, which was become as rationalistic in its methods as its function would permit, and the educated classes, which had arrived at a state of compromise. Pope, the chief poet of the preceding generation, had been visibly deistic in his thinking; as Dryden had inferribly been before him; and to such literary prestige was added the prestige of scholarship. The academic Conyers Middleton, whose *Letter from Rome* had told so heavily against Christianity in exposing the pagan derivations of much of Catholicism, and who had further damaged the doctrine of inspiration in his anonymous *Letter to Dr. Waterland* (1731), while professing to refute Tindal, had carried to yet further lengths his service to the critical spirit. In his famous *Free Inquiry* into the miracles of post-apostolic Christianity (1749), again professing to strike at Rome, he had laid the foundations of a new structure of

[1] Dr. G. W. Alberti, *Briefe betreffende den Zustand der Religion in Gross-Brittannien*, Hannover, 1752, p. 440.

comparative criticism, and had given permanent grounds for rejecting the miracles of the sacred books.

Middleton's book appeared a year after Hume's essay *Of Miracles*, and it made out no such philosophic case as Hume's against the concept of miracle; but it created at once, by its literary brilliance and its cogent argument, a sensation such as had thus far been made neither by Hume's philosophic argument nor by Francklin's anticipation of that.[1] Middleton had duly safeguarded himself by positing the certainty of the gospel miracles and of those wrought by the Apostles, on the old principle[2] that prodigies were divinely arranged so far forth as was necessary to establish Christianity, but no further. "The history of the gospel," he writes, "I hope may be true, though the history of the Church be fabulous."[3] But his argument against post-Apostolic miracles is so strictly naturalistic that no vigilant reader could fail to realize its fuller bearing upon all miracles whatsoever. With Hume and Francklin, he insisted that facts incredible in themselves could not be established by any amount or kind of testimony; and he suggested no measure of comparative credibility as between the two orders of miracle. With the deists in general, he argued that knowledge "either of the ways or will of the Creator" was to be had only through study of "that revelation which he made of himself from the beginning in the beautiful fabric of this visible world."[4] An antagonist accordingly wrote that his theses were: "First, that there were no miracles wrought in the primitive Church; Secondly, that all the primitive fathers were fools or knaves, and most of them both one and the other. And it is easy to observe, the whole tenor of your argument tends to prove, Thirdly, that no miracles were wrought by Christ or his apostles; and Fourthly, that these too were fools or knaves, or both."[5] A more temperate opponent pressed the same point in less explosive language. Citing Middleton's demand for an inductive method, this critic asks with much point: "What does he mean by 'deserting the path of Nature and experience,' but giving in to the belief of *any* miracles, and acknowledging the reality of events contrary to the known effects of the established Laws of Nature?"[6]

No other answer was seriously possible. In the very act of ostentatiously terming Tindal an "infidel," Middleton describes an answer made to him by the apologist Chapman as a sample of a

[1] Above, p. 180.
[2] Put by Huarte in 1575. Above, i, 472.
[3] *Inquiry*, p. 162.
[4] *Inquiry*, pref. pp.x, xxii.
[5] *A Letter to the Rev. Dr. Conyers Middleton, occasioned by his late "Free Inquiry."* 1749, pp. 3–4.
[6] *A Free Answer to Dr. Middleton's "Free Inquiry,"* by William Dodwell [son of the elder and brother of the younger Henry], Rector of Shottesbrook, 1749, pp. 14–15.

kind of writing which did "more hurt and discredit" to Christianity "than all the attacks of its open adversaries."[1] In support of the miracles of the gospel and the apostolic history he offers merely conventional pleas: against the miracles related by the Fathers he brings to bear an incessant battery of destructive criticism. We may sum up that by the middle of the eighteenth century the essentials of the Christian creed, openly challenged for a generation by avowed deists, were abandoned by not a few scholars within the pale of the Church, of whom Middleton was merely the least reticent. After his death was published his *Vindication* of the *Inquiry* (1751); and in his collected works (1752) was included his *Reflections on the Variations or Inconsistencies which are found among the Four Evangelists*, wherein it is demonstrated that "the belief of the inspiration and absolute infallibility of the evangelists seems to be more absurd than even that of transubstantiation itself."[2] The main grounds of orthodoxy were thus put in doubt in the name of a critical orthodoxy. In short, the deistic movement had done what it lay in it to do. The old evangelical or pietistic view of life was discredited among instructed people, and in this sense it was Christianity that had "decayed." Its later recovery was economic, not intellectual.

Thus Skelton writes in 1751 that "our modern apologists for Christianity often defend it on deistical principles" (*Deism Revealed*, pref. p. xii. Cp. vol. ii, pp. 234, 237). See also Sir Leslie Stephen as cited above, p. 149, *note;* and Gostwick, *German Culture and Christianity*, 1882, pp. 33–36.

An interesting instance of liberalizing orthodoxy is furnished by the Rev. Arthur Ashley Sykes, who contributed many volumes to the general deistic discussion, some of them anonymously. In the preface to his *Essay on the Truth of the Christian Religion* (1732; 2nd ed. enlarged, 1755) Sykes remarks that "since..... systematical opinions have been received and embraced in such a manner that it has not been safe to contradict them, the burden of vindicating Christianity has been very much increased. Its friends have been much embarrassed through fear of speaking against *local truths;* and its adversaries have so successfully attacked those weaknesses that Christianity itself has been deemed indefensible, when in reality the follies of Christians alone have been so." Were Christians left to the simple doctrines of Christ and the Apostles, he contends, Infidelity could make no converts. And at the close of the book he writes: "Would to God that Christians would be content with the plainness and simplicity of the gospel.....That they would not vend under the name of evangelical truth the absurd and

[1] *Inquiry*, p. 162.

[2] *Works*, 2nd ed. 1755, ii, 348.

contradictory schemes of ignorant or wicked men! That they would part with that load of rubbish which makes thinking men almost sink under the weight, and gives too great a handle for Infidelity!" Such writing could not give satisfaction to the ecclesiastical authorities; and as little could Sykes's remarkable admission (*The Principles and Connection of Natural and Revealed Religion*, 1740, p. 242): "When the advantages of revelation are to be specified, I cannot conceive that it should be maintained as necessary to *fix a rule of morality*. For what one principle of morality is there which the heathen moralists had not asserted or maintained? Before ever any revelation is offered to mankind they are supposed to be so well acquainted with moral truths as from them to judge of the truth of the revelation itself." Again he writes:—

"Nor can revelation be necessary to *ascertain religion*. For religion consisting in nothing but doing our duties from a sense of the being of God, revelation is not necessary to this end, unless it be said that we cannot know that there is a God, and what our duties are, without it. *Reason* will teach us that there is a *God*.....that we are to be just and charitable to our neighbours; that we are to be temperate and sober in ourselves" (*id.* p. 244).

This is simple Shaftesburyan deism, and all that the apologist goes on to contend for is that revelation "contains *motives* and *reasons* for the practice of what is right, more and different from what natural reason without this help can suggest." He seems, however, to have believed in miracles, though an anonymous *Essay on the Nature, Design, and Origin of Sacrifices* (1748) which is ascribed to him quietly undermines the whole evangelical doctrine. Throughout, he is remarkable for the amenity of his tone towards "infidels."

Balguy, a man of less ability, is notably latitudinarian in his theology. In the very act of criticizing the deists, he complains of Locke's arbitrariness in deriving morality from the will of God. Religion, he argues, is so derived, but morality is inherent in the whole nature of things, and is the same for God and men. This position, common to the school of Clarke, is at bottom that of Shaftesbury and the Naturalists. All that Balguy says for religion is that a doctrine of rewards and punishments is necessary to stimulate the average moral sense; and that the Christian story of the condescension of Omnipotence in coming to earth and suffering misery for man's sake ought to overwhelm the imagination! (See *A Letter to a Deist*, 2nd ed. 1730, pp. 5, 14, 15, 31; *Foundation of Moral Goodness*, pt. ii, 1729, p. 41 *sq.*)

The next intellectual step in natural course would have been a revision of the deistic assumptions, insofar, that is, as certain positive assumptions were common to the deists. But, as we have seen,

certain fresh issues were raised as among the deists themselves. In addition to those above noted, there was the profoundly important one as to ethics. Shaftesbury, who rejected the religious basis, held a creed of optimism; and this optimism was assailed by Mandeville, who in consequence was opposed as warmly by the deist Hutcheson and others as by Law and Berkeley. To grapple with this problem, and with the underlying cosmic problem, there was needed at least as much general mental activity as went to the antecedent discussion; and the main activity of the nation was now being otherwise directed. The negative process, the impeachment of Christian supernaturalism, had been accomplished so far as the current arguments went. Toland and Collins had fought the battle of free discussion, forcing ratiocination on the Church; Collins had shaken the creed of prophecy; Shaftesbury had impugned the religious conception of morals; and Mandeville had done so more profoundly, laying the foundations of scientific utilitarianism.[1] So effective had been the utilitarian propaganda in general that the orthodox Brown (author of the once famous *Estimate* of the life of his countrymen), in his criticism of Shaftesbury (1751), wrote as a pure utilitarian against an inconsistent one, and defended Christianity on strictly utilitarian lines. Woolston, following up Collins, had shaken the faith in New Testament miracles; Middleton had done it afresh with all the decorum that Woolston lacked; and Hume had laid down with masterly clearness the philosophic principle which rebuts all attempts to prove miracles as such.[2] Tindal had clinched the case for "natural" theism as against revelationism; and the later deists, notably Morgan, had to some extent combined these results.[3] This literature was generally distributed; and so far the case had been thrashed out.

§ 13

To carry intellectual progress much further there was needed a general movement of scientific study and a reform in education. The translation of La Mettrie's *Man a Machine* (1749)[4] found a public no better prepared for the problems he raised than that addressed by Strutt eighteen years before; and the reply of Luzac, *Man More than a Machine*, in the preface to which the translator (1752) declared that "irreligion and infidelity overspread the land,"

[1] Cp. essay on Mandeville, in the author's *Pioneer Humanists*, 1907.
[2] As against the objections of Mr. Lang, see the author's paper in *Studies in Religious Fallacy*.
[3] Cp. the summary of Farrar, *Crit. Hist. of Freethought*, pp. 177–78, which is founded on that of Pusey's early *Historical Enquiry* concerning German Rationalism, pp. 124–26.
[4] Rep. same year at Dublin: 2nd ed. 1750. The first ed. was ascribed to D'Argens—an error caused though not justified by the publisher's notice.

probably satisfied what appetite there was for such a discussion. There had begun a change in the prevailing mental life, a diversion of interest from ideas as such to political and mercantile interests. The middle and latter part of the eighteenth century is the period of the rise of (1) the new machine industries, and (2) the new imperialistic policy of Chatham.[1] Both alike withdrew men from problems of mere belief, whether theological or scientific.[2] That the reaction was not one of mere fatigue over deism we have already seen. It was a general diversion of energy, analogous to what had previously taken place in France in the reign of Louis XIV. As the poet Gray, himself orthodox, put the case in 1754, "the mode of freethinking has given place to the mode of not thinking at all."[3] In Hume's opinion the general pitch of national intelligence south of the Tweed was lowered.[4] This state of things of course was favourable to religious revival; but what took place was rather a new growth of emotional pietism in the new industrial masses (the population being now on a rapid increase), under the ministry of the Wesleys and Whitefield, and a further growth of similar religion in the new provincial middle-class that grew up on the industrial basis. The universities all the while were at the lowest ebb of culture, but officially rabid against philosophic freethinking.[5]

It would be a great mistake, however, to suppose that all this meant a dying out of deism among the educated classes. The statement of Goldsmith, about 1760, that deists in general "have been driven into a confession of the necessity of revelation, or an open avowal of atheism,"[6] is not to be taken seriously. Goldsmith, whose own orthodoxy is very doubtful, had a whimsical theory that skepticism, though it might not injure morals, has a "manifest tendency to subvert the literary merits" of any country;[7] and argued accordingly. Deism, remaining fashionable, did but fall partly into the background of living interests, the more concrete issues of politics and the new imaginative literature occupying the foreground. It was early in the reign of George III that Sir William Blackstone, having had the curiosity to listen in succession

[1] The point is further discussed in *Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 175–76.
[2] Cp. G. B. Hertz, *The Old Colonial System*, 1905, pp. 4, 22, 93, 157.
[3] Letter xxxi, in Mason's *Memoir*.
[4] Hill Burton's *Life of Hume*, ii, 433, 434, 484–85, 487.
[5] Compare the verdicts of Gibbon in his *Autobiography*, and of Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, bk. v, ch. i, art. 2; and see the memoir of Smith in 1831 ed. and McCulloch's ed., and Rae's *Life of Adam Smith*, p. 24. It appears that about 1764 many English people sent their sons to Edinburgh University on account of the better education there. Letter of Blair, in Burton's *Life of Hume*, ii, 229.
[6] *Essays*, iv, end.
[7] *Present State of Polite Learning*, 1765, ch. vi. His story of how the father of St. Foix cured the youth of the desire to rationalize his creed is not suggestive of conviction. The father pointed to a crucifix, saying, "Behold the fate of a reformer." The story has been often plagiarized since—*e.g.*, in Galt's *Annals of the Parish*.

to the preaching of every clergyman in London, "did not hear a single discourse which had more Christianity in it than the writings of Cicero," and declared that it would have been impossible for him to discover from what he heard whether the preacher were a follower of Confucius, of Mahomet, or of Christ.[1] When the Church was thus deistic, the educated laity can have been no less so. The literary status of deism after 1750 was really higher than ever. It was now represented by Hume; by ADAM SMITH (*Moral Sentiments*, 1759); by the scholarship of Conyers Middleton; and by the posthumous works (1752–54) of Lord BOLINGBROKE, who, albeit more of a debater than a thinker, debated often with masterly skill, in a style unmatched for harmony and energetic grace, which had already won him a great literary prestige, though the visible insincerity of his character, and the habit of browbeating, always countervailed his charm. His influence, commonly belittled, was much greater than writers like Johnson would admit; and it went deep. Voltaire, who had been his intimate, tells[2] that he had known some young pupils of Bolingbroke who altogether denied the historic actuality of the Gospel Jesus—a stretch of criticism beyond the assimilative power of that age.

His motive to write for posthumous publication, however, seems rather to have been the venting of his tumultuous feelings than any philosophic purpose. An overweening deist, he is yet at much pains to disparage the à priori argument for deism, bestowing some of his most violent epithets on Dr. Samuel Clarke, who seems to have exasperated him in politics. But his castigation of "divines" is tolerably impartial on that side; and he is largely concerned to deprive them of grounds for their functions, though he finally insists that churches are necessary for purposes of public moral teaching. His own teachings represent an effort to rationalize deism. The God whom he affirms is to be conceived or described only as omnipotent and omniscient (or all-wise), not as good or benevolent any more than as vindictive. Thus he had assimilated part of the Spinozistic and the atheistic case against anthropomorphism, while still using anthropomorphic language on the score that "we must speak of God after the manner of men." Beyond this point he compromises to the extent of denying special while admitting collective or social providences; though he is positive in his denial of the actuality or the moral need of a future state. As to morals he takes the ordinary deistic line, putting the innate "law of nature"

[1] Abbey and Overton, *The English Church in the Eighteenth Century*, 1878, ii, 37.
[2] *Dieu et les Hommes*, ch. xxxix.

as the sufficient and only revelation by the deity to his creatures. On the basis of that inner testimony he rejects the Old Testament as utterly unworthy of deity, but endorses the universal morality found in the gospels, while rejecting their theology. It was very much the deism of Voltaire, save that it made more concessions to anti-theistic logic.

The weak side of Bolingbroke's polemic was its inconsistency—a flaw deriving from his character. In the spirit of a partisan debater he threw out at any point any criticism that appeared for the moment plausible; and, having no scientific basis or saving rectitude, would elsewhere take up another and a contradictory position. Careful antagonists could thus discredit him by mere collation of his own utterances.[1] But, the enemy being no more consistent than he, his influence was not seriously affected in the world of ordinary readers; and much of his attack on "divines," on dogmas, and on Old Testament morality must have appealed to many, thus carrying on the discredit of orthodoxy in general. Leland devoted to him an entire volume of his *View of the Principal Deistical Writers*, and in all bestows more space upon him than on all the others together—a sufficient indication of his vogue.

In his lifetime, however, Bolingbroke had been extremely careful to avoid compromising himself. Mr. Arthur Hassall, in his generally excellent monograph on Bolingbroke (Statesmen Series, 1889, p. 226), writes, in answer to the attack of Johnson, that "Bolingbroke, during his lifetime, had never scrupled to publish criticisms, remarkable for their freedom, on religious subjects." I cannot gather to what he refers; and Mr. Walter Sichel, in his copious biography (2 vols. 1901–1902), indicates no such publications. The *Letters on the Study and Use of History*, which contain (Lett. iii, sect. 2) a skeptical discussion of the Pentateuch as history, though written in 1735–36, were only posthumously published, in 1752. The *Examen Important de Milord Bolingbroke*, produced by Voltaire in 1767, but dated 1736, is Voltaire's own work, based on Bolingbroke. In his letter to Swift of September 12, 1724 (*Swift's Works*, Scott's ed. 1824, xvi, 448–49), Bolingbroke angrily repudiates the title of *esprit fort*, declaring, in the very temper in which pious posterity has aspersed himself, that "such are the pests of society, because they endeavour to loosen the bands of it.....I therefore not only disown, but I detest, this character." In this letter he even affects to believe in "the truth of the divine revelation

[1] Cp. Bishop Law, *Considerations on the Theory of Religion*, 6th ed. 1774, p. 65, *note*, and the *Analysis* of Bolingbroke's writings (1755) there cited. Mr. Sichel's reply to Sir L. Stephen's criticism may or may not be successful; but he does not deal with Bishop Law's.

of Christianity." He began to write his essays, it is true, before his withdrawal to France in 1735, but with no intention of speedily publishing them. In his *Letter to Mr. Pope* (published with the *Letter to Wyndham*, 1753), p. 481, he writes: "I have been a martyr of faction in politics, and have no vocation to be so in philosophy." Cp. pp. 485–86. It is thus a complete blunder on the part of Bagehot to say (*Literary Studies*, Hutton's ed. iii, 137) that Butler's *Analogy*, published in 1736, was "designed as a confutation of Shaftesbury *and Bolingbroke*." It is even said (Warton, *Essay on Pope*, 4th ed. ii, 294–95) that Pope did not know Bolingbroke's real opinions; but Pope's untruthfulness was such as to discredit such a statement. Cp. Bolingbroke's *Letter* as cited, p. 521, and his *Philosophical Works*, 8vo-ed. 1754, ii, 405. It is noteworthy that a volume of controversial sermons entitled *A Preservative against unsettled notions and Want of Principles in Religion*, so entirely stupid in its apologetics as to be at times positively entertaining, was published in 1715 by Joseph Trapp, M.A., "Chaplain to the Right Honble. The Lord Viscount Bolingbroke."

In seeking to estimate Bolingbroke's posthumous influence we have to remember that after the publication of his works the orthodox members of his own party, who otherwise would have forgiven him all his vices and insincerities, have held him up to hatred. Scott, for instance, founding on Bolingbroke's own dishonest denunciation of freethinkers as men seeking to loosen the bands of society, pronounced his arrangement for the posthumous issue of his works "an act of wickedness more purely diabolical than any hitherto upon record in the history of any age or nation" (Note to Bolingbroke's letter above cited in *Swift's Works*, xvi, 450). It would be an error, on the other hand, to class him among either the great sociologists or the great philosophers. Mr. Sichel undertakes to show (vol. ii, ch. x) that Bolingbroke had stimulated Gibbon to a considerable extent in his treatment of early Christianity. This is in itself quite probable, and some of the parallels cited are noteworthy; but Mr. Sichel, who always writes as a panegyrist, makes no attempt to trace the common French sources for both. He does show that Voltaire manipulated Bolingbroke's opinions in reproducing them. But he does not critically recognize the incoherence of Bolingbroke's eloquent treatises. Mr. Hassall's summary is nearer the truth; but that in turn does not note how well fitted was Bolingbroke's swift and graceful declamation to do its work with the general public, which (if it accepted him at all) would make small account of self-contradiction.

§ 14

In view of such a reinforcement of its propaganda, deism could

not be regarded as in the least degree written down. In 1765, in fact, we find Diderot recounting, on the authority of d'Holbach, who had just returned from a visit to this country, that "the Christian religion is nearly extinct in England. The deists are innumerable; there are almost no atheists; those who are so conceal it. An atheist and a scoundrel are almost synonymous terms for them."[1] Nor did the output of deistic literature end with the posthumous works of Bolingbroke. These were followed by translations of the new writings of VOLTAIRE,[2] who had assimilated the whole propaganda of English deism, and gave it out anew with a wit and brilliancy hitherto unknown in argumentative and critical literature. The freethinking of the third quarter of the century, though kept secondary to more pressing questions, was thus at least as deeply rooted and as convinced as that of the first quarter; and it was probably not much less common among educated men, though new social influences caused it to be more decried.

The hapless Chatterton, fatally precocious, a boy in years and experience of life, a man in understanding at seventeen, incurred posthumous obloquy more for his "infidelity" than for the harmless literary forgeries which reveal his poetic affinity to a less prosaic age. It is a memorable fact that this first recovery of the lost note of imaginative poetry in that "age of prose and reason" is the exploit of a boy whose mind was as independently "freethinking" on current religion as it was original even in its imitative reversion to the poetics of the past. Turning away from the impossible mythicism and mysticism of the Tudor and Stuart literatures, as from the fanaticism of the Puritans, the changing English world after the Restoration had let fall the artistic possession of imaginative feeling and style which was the true glory of the time of Renascence. The ill-strung genius of Chatterton seems to have been the first to reunite the sense of romantic beauty with the spirit of critical reason. He was a convinced deist, avowing in his verse, in his pathetic will (1770), in a late letter, and at times in his talk, that he was "no Christian," and contemning the ethic of Scripture history and the absurdity of literal inspiration.[3] Many there must have been who went as far, with less courage of avowal.

What was lacking to the age, once more, was a social foundation on which it could not only endure but develop. In a nation of which the majority had no intellectual culture, such a foundation could not

1 *Mémoires de Diderot*, ed. 1841, ii, 25.
2 These had begun as early as 1753 (*Micromégas*).
3 *Works*, ed. 1842, i, pp. cix, 445; ii, 628, 728. Cp. the poem *Kew Gardens*, left in MS.

exist. Green exaggerates[1] when he writes that "schools there were none, save the grammar schools of Edward and Elizabeth";[2] but by another account only twelve public schools were founded in the long reign of George III;[3] and, as a result of the indifference of two generations, masses of the people "were ignorant and brutal to a degree which it is hard to conceive."[4] A great increase of population had followed on the growth of towns and the development of commerce and manufactures even between 1700 and 1760;[5] and thereafter the multiplication was still more rapid. There was thus a positive fall in the culture standards of the majority of the people. According to Massey, "hardly any tradesman in 1760 had more instruction than qualified him to add up a bill"; and "a labourer, mechanic, or domestic servant who could read or write possessed a rare accomplishment."[6] As for the Charity Schools established between 1700 and 1750, their express object was to rear humble tradesmen and domestics, not to educate in the proper sense of the term.

In the view of life which accepted this state of things the educated deists seem to have shared; at least, there is no record of any agitation by them for betterment. The state of political thought was typified in the struggle over "Wilkes and Liberty," from which cool temperaments like Hume's turned away in contempt; and it is significant that poor men were persecuted for freethinking while the better-placed went free. JACOB ILIVE, for denying in a pamphlet (1753) the truth of revelation, was pilloried thrice, and sent to hard labour for three years. In 1754 the Grand Jury of Middlesex "presented" the editor and publisher of Bolingbroke's posthumous works[7]—a distinction that in the previous generation had been bestowed on Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees;* and in 1761, as before noted, Peter Annet, aged seventy, was pilloried twice and sent to prison for discrediting the Pentateuch; as if that were a more serious offence than his former attacks on the gospels and on St. Paul. The personal influence of George III, further, told everywhere against freethinking; and the revival of penalties would have checked publishing even if there had been no withdrawal of interest to politics.

Yet more or less freethinking treatises did appear at intervals

[1] I here take a few sentences from my paper, *The Church and Education*, 1903.
[2] *Short History*, p. 717. The *Concise Description of the Endowed Grammar Schools*, by Nicholas Carlisle, 1818, shows that schools were founded in all parts of the country by private bequest or public action during the eighteenth century.
[3] Collis, in *Transactions of the Social Science Association*, 1857, p. 126. According to Collis, 48 had been founded by James I, 28 under Charles I, 16 under the Commonwealth, 36 under Charles II, 4 under James II, 7 under William and Mary, 11 under Anne, 17 under George I, and 7 under George II. He does not indicate their size.
[4] Green, as last cited. [5] Gibbins, *Industrial History of England*, 1894, p. 151.
[6] *Hist. of England under George III*, ed. 1865, ii, 83.
[7] The document is given in Ritchie's *Life of Hume*, 1807, pp. 53–55.

in addition to the works of the better-known writers, such as Bolingbroke and Hume, after the period commonly marked as that of the "decline of deism." In the list may be included a few by Unitarians, who at this stage were doing critical work. Like a number of the earlier works above mentioned, the following (save Evanson) are overlooked in Sir Leslie Stephen's survey:—

1746. *Essay on Natural Religion.* Falsely attributed to Dryden.
„ *Deism fairly stated and fully vindicated*, etc. Anon.
1749. J. G. Cooper, *Life of Socrates.*
1750. John Dove, *A Creed founded on Truth and Common Sense.*
„ *The British Oracle.* (Two numbers only.)
1752. *The Pillars of Priestcraft and Orthodoxy Shaken.* Four vols. of free-thinking pamphlets, collected (and some written) by Thomas Gordon, formerly secretary to Trenchard. Edited by R. Barron. (Rep. 1768.)
1765. W. Dudgeon, *Philosophical Works* (reprints of those of 1732,–4,–7,–9, above mentioned). Privately printed—at Glasgow?
1772. E. Evanson, *The Doctrines of a Trinity and the Incarnation*, etc.
1773. —— *Three Discourses* (1. Upon the Man after God's own Heart; 2. Upon the Faith of Abraham; 3. Upon the Seal of the Foundation of God).
1777. —— *Letter to Bishop Hurd.*
1781. W. Nicholson, *The Doubts of the Infidels.* (Rep. by R. Carlile.)
1782. W. Turner, *Answer to Dr. Priestley's Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever.*
1785. Dr. G. Hoggart Toulmin, *The Antiquity and Duration of the World.*
1789. —— *The Eternity of the Universe.*[1] (Rep. 1825.)
„ Dr. T. Cooper, *Tracts, Ethical, Theological, and Political.*
1792. E. Evanson, *The Dissonance of the Four Evangelists.* (Rep. 1805.)
1795. Dr. J. A. O'Keefe, *On the Progress of the Human Understanding.*
1797. John C. Davies, *The Scripturian's Creed.* Prosecuted and imprisoned. (Book rep. 1822 and 1839.)

Of the work here noted a considerable amount was done by Unitarians, Evanson being of that persuasion, though at the time of writing his earlier Unitarian works he was an Anglican vicar.[2] During the first half of the eighteenth century, despite the movement at the end of the seventeenth, specific anti-Trinitarianism was not much in evidence, the deistic controversy holding the foreground. But gradually Unitarianism made fresh headway. One dissenting clergyman, Martin Tomkyns, who had been dismissed by his congregation at Stoke Newington for his "Arian or Unitarian opinions," published in 1722 *A Sober Appeal to a Turk or an Indian, concerning the plain sense of the Trinity*, in reply to the treatise of Dr. Isaac Watts on *The Christian Doctrine of the Trinity.* A second edition of Tomkyns's book appeared in 1748, with a further reply to Watts's *Dissertations* of 1724. The result seems to have been an unsettlement of the orthodoxy of the hymn-writer. There is express testimony from Dr. Lardner, a very trustworthy witness, that

[1] A reply, *The World proved to be not eternal nor mechanical*, appeared in 1790.
[2] The *Doctrines of a Trinity and the Incarnation of God* was published anonymously.

Watts in his latter years, "before he was seized with an imbecility of his faculties," was substantially a Unitarian. His special papers on the subject were suppressed by his executors; but the full text of his *Solemn Address to the Great and Blessed God* goes far to bear out Lardner's express assertion.[1] Other prominent religionists were more outspoken. The most distinguished names associated with the position were those of Lardner and Priestley, of whom the former, trained as a simple "dissenter," avowedly reached his conclusions without much reference to Socinian literature;[2] and the second, who was similarly educated, no less independently gave up the doctrines of the Atonement and the Trinity, passing later from the Arian to the Socinian position after reading Lardner's *Letter on the Logos*.[3] As Priestley derived his determinism from Collins,[4] it would appear that the deistical movement had set up a general habit of reasoning which thus wrought even on Christians who, like Lardner and Priestley, undertook to rebut the objections of unbelievers to their faith. A generally rationalistic influence is to be noted in the works of the Unitarian Antipædobaptist Dr. Joshua Toulmin, author of lives of Socinus (1777) and Biddle (1789), and many other solid works, including a sermon on "The Injustice of classing Unitarians with Deists and Infidels" (1797). In his case the "classing" was certainly inconvenient. In 1791 the effigy of Paine was burned before his door, and his windows broken. His house was saved by being closely guarded; but his businesses of schoolkeeping and bookselling had to be given up. It thus becomes intelligible how, after a period in which Dissent, contemned by the State Church, learned to criticize that Church's creed, there emerged in England towards the close of the eighteenth century a fresh movement of specific Unitarianism.

Evanson and Toulmin were scholarly writers, though without the large learning of Lardner and the propagandist energy and reputation of Priestley; and the Unitarian movement, in a quiet fashion, made a numerical progress out of all proportion to that of orthodoxy. It owed much of its immunity at this stage, doubtless, to the large element of tacit deism in the Church; and apart from the scholarly work of Lardner both Priestley and Evanson did something for New Testament criticism, as well as towards the

[1] See the *Biographical Introduction* to the Unitarian reprint of Watts's *Solemn Address*, 1840, which gives the letters of Lardner. And cp. Skeats, *Hist. of the English Free Churches*, ed. Miall, p. 240.

[2] *Life of Lardner*, by Dr. Kippis, prefixed to *Works*, ed. 1835, i. p. xxxii.

[3] *Memoirs of Priestley*, 1806, pp. 30-32, 35, 37. The *Letter on the Logos* was addressed by Lardner to the first Lord Barrington, and was first published anonymously, in 1759.

[4] *Memoirs of Priestley*, p. 19.

clearing-up of Christian origins. Evanson was actually prosecuted in 1773, on local initiative, for a sermon of Unitarian character delivered by him in the parish church of Tewkesbury on Easter-Day of 1771; and, what is much more remarkable, members of his congregation, at a single defence-meeting in an inn, collected £150 to meet his costs.[1] Five years later he had given up the belief in eternal punishment, though continuing to believe in "long protracted" misery for sinners.[2] Still later, after producing his *Dissonance*, he became uncommonly drastic in his handling of the Canon. He lived well into the nineteenth century, and published in 1805 a vigorous tractate, *Second Thoughts on the Trinity, recommended to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Gloucester.* In that he treats the First Gospel as a forgery of the second century. The method is indiscriminating, and the author lays much uncritical stress upon prophecy. On the whole, the Unitarian contribution to rational thought, then as later, was secondary or ancillary, though on the side of historical investigation it was important. Lardner's candour is as uncommon as his learning; and Priestley[3] and Evanson have a solvent virtue.[4] In all three the limitation lies in the fixed adherence to the concept of revelation, which withheld them from radical rationalism even as it did from Arianism. Evanson's ultra-orthodox acceptance of the Apocalypse is significant of his limitations; and Priestley's calibre is indicated by his life-long refusal to accept the true scientific inference from his own discovery of oxygen. A more pronounced evolution was that of the Welsh deist David Williams, who, after publishing two volumes of *Sermons on Religious Hypocrisy* (1774), gave up his post as a dissenting preacher, and, in conjunction with Franklin and other freethinkers, opened a short-lived deistic chapel in Margaret Street, London (1776), where there was used a "Liturgy on the Universal Principles of Religion and Morality."[5]

§ 15

On the other hand, apart from the revival of popular religion under Whitefield and Wesley, which won multitudes of the people

1 Pamphlet of 1778, printing the sermon, with reply to a local attack.

2 MS. alteration in print. See also p. 1 of Epistle Dedicatory.

3 In criticizing whom Sir Leslie Stephen barely notices his scientific work, but dwells much on his religious fallacies—a course which would make short work of the fame of Newton.

4 A Church dignitary has described Evanson's *Dissonance* as "the commencement of the destructive criticism of the Fourth Gospel" (Archdeacon Watkins's Bampton Lectures, 1890, p. 174).

5 Williams (d. 1816), who published 3 vols. of "Lectures on Education" and other works, has a longer claim on remembrance as the founder of the "Literary Fund."

whom no higher culture could reach, there was no recovery of educated belief upon intellectual lines; though there was a steady detachment of energy to the new activities of conquest and commerce which mark the second half of the eighteenth century in England. On this state of things supervened the massive performance of the greatest historical writer England had yet produced. GIBBON, educated not by Oxford but by the recent scholarly literature of France, had as a mere boy seen, on reading Bossuet, the theoretic weakness of Protestantism, and had straightway professed Romanism. Shaken as to that by a skilled Swiss Protestant, he speedily became a rationalist pure and simple, with as little of the dregs of deism in him as any writer of his age; and his great work begins, or rather signalizes (since Hume and Robertson preceded him), a new era of historical writing, not merely by its sociological treatment of the rise of Christianity, but by its absolutely anti-theological handling of all things.

The importance of the new approach may be at once measured by the zeal of the opposition. In no case, perhaps, has the essentially passional character of religious resistance to new thought been more vividly shown than in that of the contemporary attacks upon Gibbon's *History*. There is not to be found in controversial literature such another annihilating rejoinder as was made by Gibbon to the clerical zealots who undertook to confound him on points of scholarship, history, and ratiocination. The contrast between the mostly spiteful incompetence of the attack and the finished mastery of the reply put the faith at a disadvantage from which it never intellectually recovered, though other forces reinstated it socially. By the admission of Macaulay, who thought Gibbon "most unfair" to religion, the whole troup of his assailants are now "utterly forgotten"; and those orthodox commentators who later sought to improve on their criticism have in turn, with a notable uniformity, been rebutted by their successors; till Gibbon's critical section ranks as the first systematically scientific handling of the problem of the rise of Christianity. He can be seen to have profited by all the relevant deistic work done before him, learning alike from Toland, from Middleton, and from Bolingbroke; though his acknowledgments are mostly paid to respectable Protestants and Catholics, as Basnage, Beausobre, Lardner, Mosheim, and Tillemont; and the sheer solidity of the work has sustained it against a hundred years of hostile comment.[1] While Gibbon was thus earning for his

[1] The subject is discussed at length in the essay on Gibbon in the author's *Pioneer Humanists*.

country a new literary distinction, the orthodox interest was concerned above all things to convict him of ignorance, incompetence, and dishonesty; and Davis, the one of his assailants who most fully manifested all of these qualities, and who will long be remembered solely from Gibbon's deadly exposure, was rewarded with a royal pension. Another, Apthorp, received an archiepiscopal living; while Chelsum, the one who almost alone wrote against him like a gentleman, got nothing. But no cabal could avail to prevent the instant recognition, at home and abroad, of the advent of a new master in history; and in the worst times of reaction which followed, the *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* impassively defied the claims of the ruling creed.

In a literary world which was eagerly reading Gibbon[1] and Voltaire,[2] there was a peculiar absurdity in Burke's famous question (1790) as to "Who now reads Bolingbroke" and the rest of the older deists.[3] The fashionable public was actually reading Bolingbroke even then;[4] and the work of the older deists was being done with new incisiveness and thoroughness by their successors.[5] In the unstudious world of politics, if the readers were few the indifferentists were many. Evanson could truthfully write to Bishop Hurd in 1777 that "That general unbelief of revealed religion among the higher orders of our countrymen, which, however your Lordship and I might differ in our manner of accounting for it, is too notorious for either of us to doubt of, hath, by a necessary consequence, produced in the majority of our present legislators an absolute indifference towards religious questions of every kind."[6] Beside Burke in Parliament, all the while, was the Prime Minister, WILLIAM PITT the younger, an agnostic deist.

> Whether or not the elder Pitt was a deist, the younger gave very plain signs of being at least no more. Gladstone (*Studies subsidiary to the Works of Bishop Butler*, ed. 1896, pp. 30–33) has sought to discredit the recorded testimony of Wilberforce (*Life of Wilberforce*, 1838, i, 98) that Pitt told him "Bishop

[1] Cp. Bishop Watson's *Apology for Christianity* (1776) as to the vogue of unbelief at that date. (*Two Apologies*, ed. 1806, p. 121. Cp. pp. 179, 399.)

[2] The panegyric on Voltaire delivered at his death by Frederick the Great (Nov. 26, 1778) was promptly translated into English (1779).

[3] *Reflections on the French Revolution*, 1790, p. 131.

[4] See Hannah More's letter of April, 1777, in her *Life*, abridged 16mo-ed. p. 36. An edition of Shaftesbury, apparently, appeared in 1773, and another in 1790.

[5] The essays of Hume, including the *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion* (1779), were now circulated in repeated editions. Mr. Rae, in his valuable *Life of Adam Smith*, p. 311, cites a German observer, Wendeborn, as writing in 1785 that the *Dialogues*, though a good deal discussed in Germany, had made no sensation in England, and were at that date entirely forgotten. But a second edition had been called for in 1779, and they were added to a fresh edition of the essays in 1788. Any "forgetting" is to be set down to preoccupation with other interests.

[6] *Letter to the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry*, 1777, p. 3.

Butler's work raised in his mind more doubts than it had answered." Gladstone points to another passage in Wilberforce's diary which states that Pitt "commended Butler's *Analogy*" (*Life*, i, 90). But the context shows that Pitt had commended the book for the express purpose of turning Wilberforce's mind from its evangelical bias. Wilberforce was never a deist, and the purpose accordingly could not have been to make him orthodox. The two testimonies are thus perfectly consistent; especially when we note the further statement credibly reported to have been made by Wilberforce (*Life*, i, 95), that Pitt later "*tried to reason me out of my convictions.*" We have yet further the emphatic declaration of Pitt's niece, Lady Hester Stanhope, that he "never went to church in his life..... never even talked about religion" (*Memoirs of Lady Hester Stanhope*, 1845, iii, 166–67). This was said in emphatic denial of the genuineness of the unctuous death-bed speech put in Pitt's mouth by Gifford. Lady Hester's high veracity is accredited by her physician (*Travels of Lady Hester Stanhope*, 1846, i, pref. p. 11). No such character can be given to the conventional English biography of the period.

We have further to note the circumstantial account by Wilberforce in his letter to the Rev. S. Gisborne immediately after Pitt's death (*Correspondence*, 1840, ii, 69–70), giving the details he had had in confidence from the Bishop of Lincoln. They are to the effect that, after some demur on Pitt's part ("that he was not worthy to offer up any prayer, or was too weak,") the Bishop prayed with him once. Wilberforce adds his "fear" that "no further religious intercourse took place before or after, *and I own I thought what was inserted in the papers impossible to be true.*"

There is clear testimony that Charles James Fox, Pitt's illustrious rival, was no more of a believer than he,[1] though equally careful to make no profession of unbelief. And it was Fox who, above all the English statesmen of his day, fought the battle of religious toleration[2] —a service which finally puts him above Burke, and atones for many levities of political action.

Among thinking men too the nascent science of geology was setting up a new criticism of "revelation"—this twenty years before the issue of the epoch-making works of Hutton.[3] In England the impulse seems to have come from the writings of the Abbé Langlet du Fresnoy, De Maillet, and Mirabaud, challenging the Biblical

[1] Dr. Parr, *Characters of C. J. Fox*, i, 220; cited in *Charles James Fox, a Commentary*, by W. S. Landor, ed. by S. Wheeler, 1907, p. 147. Fox's secretary and biographer, Trotter, while anxious to discredit the statement of Parr, gives such a qualified account (*Memoirs of the Latter Years of C. J. Fox*, 1811, pp. 470–71) of Fox's views on immortality as to throw much doubt on the stronger testimony of B. C. Walpole (*Recollections of C. J. Fox*, 1806, p. 242). [2] See J. L. Le B. Hammond, *Charles James Fox*, 1903, ch. xiii.

[3] See a letter in Bishop Watson's *Life*, i, 402; and cp. Buckle, ch. vii, *note* 218.

account of the antiquity of the earth. The new phase of "infidelity" was of course furiously denounced, one of the most angry and most absurd of its opponents being the poet Cowper.[1] Still rationalism persisted. Paley, writing in 1786, protests that "Infidelity is now served up in every shape that is likely to allure, surprise, or beguile the imagination, in a fable, a tale, a novel, or a poem, in interspersed or broken hints, remote and oblique surmises, in books of travel, of philosophy, of natural history—in a word, in any form rather than that of a professed and regular disquisition."[2] The orthodox Dr. J. Ogilvie, in the introduction to his *Inquiry into the Causes of the Infidelity and Skepticism of the Times* (1783), begins: "That the opinions of the deists and skeptics have spread more universally during a part of the last century and in the present than at any former æra since the resurrection of letters, is a truth to which the friends and the enemies of religion will give their suffrage without hesitation." In short, until the general reversal of all progress which followed on the French Revolution, there had been no such change of opinion as Burke alleged.

One of the most popular poets and writers of the day was the celebrated ERASMUS DARWIN, a deist, whose *Zoonomia* (1794) brought on him the charge of atheism, as it well might. However he might poetize about the Creator, Dr. Darwin in his verse and prose alike laid the foundations of the doctrines of the transmutation of species and the aqueous origin of simple forms of life which evolved into higher forms; though the idea of the descent of man from a simian species had been broached before him by Buffon and Helvétius in France, and Lords Kames and Monboddo in Scotland. The idea of a *Natura naturans* was indeed ancient; but it has been authoritatively said of Erasmus Darwin that "he was the first who proposed and consistently carried out a well-rounded theory with regard to the development of the living world—a merit which shines forth more brilliantly when we compare it with the vacillating and confused attempts of Buffon, Linnæus, and Goethe. It is the idea of a power working from within the organisms to improve their natural position"[3]—the idea which, developed by Lamarck, was modified by the great Darwin of the nineteenth century into the doctrine of natural selection.

And in the closing years of the century there arose a new promise of higher life in the apparition of MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT,

[1] See his *Task*, bk. iii, 150–90 (1783–1784), for the prevailing religious tone.
[2] *Princ. of Moral Philos.* bk. v, ch. ix. The chapter tells of widespread freethinking.
[3] Ernest Krause, *Erasmus Darwin*, Eng. tr. 1879, p. 211. Cp. pp. 193, 194.

ill-starred but noble, whose *Letters on Sweden, Norway, and Denmark* (1796) show her to have been a freethinking deist of remarkable original faculty,[1] and whose *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) was the first great plea for the emancipation of her sex.

§ 16

Even in rural Scotland, the vogue of the poetry of BURNS told of germinal doubt. To say nothing of his mordant satires on pietistic types—notably *Holy Willie's Prayer*, his masterpiece in that line—Burns even in his avowed poems[2] shows small regard for orthodox beliefs; and his letters reveal him as substantially a deist, shading into a Unitarian. Such pieces as *A Prayer in the prospect of Death*, and *A Prayer under the pressure of Violent Anguish*, are plainly unevangelical;[3] and the allusions to Jesus in his letters, even when writing to Mrs. Maclehose, who desired to bring him to confession, exclude orthodox belief,[4] though they suggest Unitarianism. He frequently refers to religion in his letters, yet so constantly restricts himself to the affirmation of a belief in a benevolent God and in a future state that he cannot be supposed to have held the further beliefs which his orthodox correspondents would wish him to express. A rationalistic habit is shown even in his professions of belief, as here: "Still I am a very sincere believer in the Bible; but I am drawn by the conviction of a man, not the halter of an ass";[5] and in the passage: "Though I have no objection to what the Christian system tells us of another world, yet I own I am partial to those proofs and ideas of it which we have wrought out of our own heads and hearts."[6] Withal, Burns always claimed to be "religious," and was so even in a somewhat conventional sense. The lines:

> An atheist-laugh's a poor exchange
> For Deity offended[7]

exhibit a sufficiently commonplace conception of Omnipotence; and

[1] Letters vii, viii, ix, xix, xxii.

[2] *E.g.*, *The Ordination*, the *Address to the Deil*, A *Dedication to Gavin Hamilton*, *The Kirk's Alarm*, etc.

[3] See also the pieces printed between these in the Globe edition, pp. 66-68.

[4] The benevolent Supreme Being, he writes, "has put the immediate administration of all this into the hands of Jesus Christ—a great personage, whose relation to Him we cannot fathom, but whose relation to us is [that of] a guide and Saviour." Letter 86 in Globe ed. Letters 189 and 197, to Mrs. Dunlop, similarly fail to meet the requirements of the orthodox correspondent. The poem *Look up and See*, latterly printed several times apart from Burns's works, and extremely likely to be his, is a quite Voltairean criticism of David. If the poem be ungenuine, it is certainly by far the ablest of the unacknowledged pieces ascribed to him, alike in diction and in purport.

[5] Letter to Mrs. Dunlop, Jan. 1, 1789, in *Robert Burns and Mrs. Dunlop*, ed. by W. Wallace, 1898, p. 129. The passage is omitted from Letter 168 in the Globe ed., and presumably from other reprints.

[6] Letter to Mrs. Dunlop, July 9, 1790. Published for the first time in vol. cited, p. 266.

[7] *Epistle to a Young Friend.*

there is no sign that the poet ever did any hard thinking on the problem. But, emotionalist of genius as he was, his influence as a satirist and mitigator of the crudities and barbarities of Scots religion has been incalculably great, and underlies all popular culture progress in Scotland since his time. Constantly aspersed in his own day and world as an "infidel," he yet from the first conquered the devotion of the mass of his countrymen; though he would have been more potent for intellectual liberation if he had been by them more intelligently read. Few of them now, probably, realize that their adored poet was either a deist or a Unitarian—presumably the former.

§ 17

With the infelicity in prediction which is so much commoner with him than the "prescience" for which he is praised, Burke had announced that the whole deist school "repose in lasting oblivion." The proposition would be much more true of 999 out of every thousand writers on behalf of Christianity. It is characteristic of Burke, however, that he does not name Shaftesbury, a Whig nobleman of the sacred period.[1] A seeming justice was given to Burke's phrase by the undoubted reaction which took place immediately afterwards. In the vast panic which followed on the French Revolution, the multitude of mediocre minds in the middle and upper classes, formerly deistic or indifferent, took fright at unbelief as something now visibly connected with democracy and regicide; new money endowments were rapidly bestowed on the Church; and orthodoxy became fashionable on political grounds just as skepticism had become fashionable at the Restoration. Class interest and political prejudice wrought much in both cases; only in opposite directions. Democracy was no longer Bibliolatrous, therefore aristocracy was fain to became so, or at least to grow respectful towards the Church as a means of social control. Gibbon, in his closing years, went with the stream. And as religious wars have always tended to discredit religion, so a war partly associated with the freethinking of the French revolutionists tended to discredit freethought. The brutish wrecking of Priestley's house and library and chapel by a mob at Birmingham in 1791 was but an extreme

[1] Lecky, writing in 1865, and advancing on Burke, has said of the whole school, including Shaftesbury, that "the shadow of the tomb rests on all: a deep, unbroken silence, the chill of death, surrounds them. They have long ceased to wake any interest" (*Rationalism in Europe*, i, 116). As a matter of fact, they had been discussed by Tayler in 1853; by Pattison in 1860; and by Farrar in 1862; and they have since been discussed at length by Dr. Hunt, by Dr. Cairns, by Lange, by Gyzicki, by M. Sayous, by Sir Leslie Stephen, by Prof. Höffding, and by many others.

manifestation of a reaction which affected every form of mental life. But while Priestley went to die in the United States, another English exile, temporarily returned thence to his native land, was opening a new era of popular rationalism. Even in the height of the revolutionary tumult, and while Burke was blustering about the disappearance of unbelief, THOMAS PAINE was laying deep and wide the English foundations of a new democratic freethought; and the upper-class reaction in the nature of the case was doomed to impermanency, though it was to arrest English intellectual progress for over a generation. The French Revolution had re-introduced freethought as a vital issue, even in causing it to be banned as a danger.

That freethought at the end of the century was rather driven inwards and downwards than expelled is made clear by the multitude of fresh treatises on Christian evidences. Growing numerous after 1790, they positively swarm for a generation after Paley (1794). Cp. *Essays on the Evidence and Influence of Christianity*, Bath, 1790, pref.; Andrew Fuller, *The Gospel its own Witness*, 1799, pref. and concluding address to deists; Watson's sermon of 1795, in *Two Apologies*, ed. 1806, p. 399; Priestley's *Memoirs* (written in 1795), 1806, pp. 127–28; Wilberforce's *Practical View*, 1797, *passim* (*e.g.*, pp. 366–69, 8th ed. 1841); Rev. D. Simpson, *A Plea for Religion..... addressed to the Disciples of Thomas Paine*, 1797. The latter writer states (2nd ed. p. 126) that "infidelity is at this moment running like wildfire among the common people"; and Fuller (2nd ed. p. 128) speaks of the *Monthly Magazine* as "pretty evidently devoted to the cause of infidelity." A pamphlet on *The Rise and Dissolution of the Infidel Societies in this Metropolis* (London, 1800), by W. Hamilton Reid, describes the period as the first "in which the doctrines of infidelity have been extensively circulated among the lower orders"; and a *Summary of Christian Evidences*, by Bishop Porteous (1800; 16th ed. 1826), affirms, in agreement with the 1799 Report of the Lords' Committee on Treasonable Societies, that "new compendiums of infidelity, and new libels on Christianity, are dispersed continually, with indefatigable industry, through every part of the kingdom, and every class of the community." Freethought, in short, was becoming democratized.

As regards England, Paine is the great popular factor; and it is the bare truth to say that he brought into the old debate a new earnestness and a new moral impetus. The first part of the *Age of Reason*, hastily put together in expectation of speedy death in 1793, and including some astronomic matter that apparently antedates 1781,[1] is a swift outline of the position of the rationalizing deist,

[1] Conway, introd. to *Age of Reason*, in his ed. of Paine's Works, iv, 3.

newly conscious of firm standing-ground in astronomic science. That is the special note of Paine's gospel. He was no scholar; and the champions of the "religion of Galilee" have always been prompt to disparage any unlearned person who meddles with religion as an antagonist; but in the second part of his book Paine put hard criticism enough to keep a world of popular readers interested for well over a hundred years. The many replies are forgotten: the Biblical criticism of Paine will continue to do its work till popular orthodoxy follows the lead of professional scholarship and gives up at once the acceptance and the circulation of things incredible and indefensible as sacrosanct.

Mr. Benn (*Hist. of Eng. Rationalism in the Nineteenth Century*, i, 217) remarks that Paine's New Testament criticisms are "such as at all times would naturally occur to a reader of independent mind and strong common sense." If so, these had been up to Paine's time, and remained long afterwards, rare characteristics. And there is some mistake about Mr. Benn's criticism that "the repeated charges of fraud and imposture brought against the Apostles and Evangelists.....jar painfully on a modern ear. But they are largely due to the mistaken notion, shared by Paine with his orthodox contemporaries, that the Gospels and Acts were written by contemporaries and eye-witnesses of the events related." Many times over, Paine argues that the documents could not have been so written. *E.g.* in Conway's ed. of Works, pp. 157, 158, 159, 160, 164, 167, 168, etc. The reiterated proposition is "that the writers cannot have been eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses of what they relate; .....and consequently that the books have not been written by the persons called apostles" (p. 168). And there is some exaggeration even in Mr. Benn's remark that, "strangely enough, he accepts the Book of Daniel as genuine." Paine (ed. p. 144) merely puts a balance of probability in favour of the genuineness. It may be sometimes—it is certainly not always—true that Paine "cannot distinguish between legendary or [? and] mythical narratives" (Benn, p. 216); but it is to be feared that the disability subsists to-day in more scholarly quarters.

Despite his deadly directness, Paine, in virtue of his strong sincerity, probably jars much less on the modern ear than he did on that of his own, which was so ready to make felony of any opinion hostile to reigning prejudices. But if it be otherwise, it is to be feared that no less offence will be given by Mr. Benn's own account of the Hexateuch as "the records kept by a lying and bloodthirsty priesthood"; even if that estimate be followed by the very challengeable admission that "priesthoods are generally distinguished for their superior humanity" (Benn, p. 350, and *note*).

Henceforth there is a vital difference in the fortunes of freethought and religion alike. Always in the past the institutional strength of religion and the social weakness of freethought had lain in the credulity of the ignorant mass, which had turned to naught an infinity of rational effort. After the French Revolution, when over a large area the critical spirit began simultaneously to play on faith and life, politics and religion, its doubled activity gave it a new breadth of outlook as of energy, and the slow enlightenment of the mass opened up a new promise for the ultimate reign of reason.

Chapter XVII

FRENCH FREETHOUGHT IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

1. The fruits of the intellectual movement of the seventeenth century are seen beginning to take form on the very threshold of the eighteenth. In 1700, at the height of the reign of the King's confessors, there was privately printed the *Lettre d'Hippocrate à Damagète*, described as "the first French work openly destructive of Christianity." It was ascribed to the Comte de Boulainvilliers, a pillar of the feudal system.[1] Thus early is the sound of disintegration heard in the composite fabric of Church and State; and various fissures are seen in all parts of the structure. The king himself, so long morally discredited, could only discredit pietism by his adoption of it; the Jansenists and the Molinists [*i.e.*, the school of Molina, not of Molinos] fought incessantly; even on the side of authority there was bitter dissension between Bossuet and Fénelon;[2] and the movement of mysticism associated with the latter came to nothing, though he had the rare credit of converting, albeit to a doubtful orthodoxy, the emotional young Scotch deist Chevalier Ramsay.[3] Where the subtlety of Fénelon was not allowed to operate, the loud dialectic of Bossuet could not avail for faith as against rationalism, whatever it might do to upset the imperfect logic of Protestant sects. In no society, indeed, does mere declamation play a larger part than in that of modern France; but in no society, on the other hand, is mere declamation more sure to be disdained and derided by the keener spirits. In the years of disaster and decadence which rounded off in gloom the life of the Grand Monarque, with defeat dogging his armies and bankruptcy threatening his finances, the

[1] Lemontey, *Hist. de la régence et de la minorité de Louis XV*, 1835, ii, 358, *note*. In 1731 there was published under the name of Boulainvilliers (d. 1722) a so-called *Réfutation de Spinoza*, which was "really a popular exposition." Pollock, *Spinoza*, 2nd ed. p. 363. Sir F. Pollock assents to Voltaire's remark that Boulainvilliers "gave the poison and forgot to give the antidote."

[2] For a brief view of the facts, usually misconceived, see Lanson, pp. 610–11. Fénelon seems to have been uncandid, while Bossuet, by common consent, was malevolent. There is probably truth, however, in the view of Shaftesbury (*Characteristics*, ed. 1900, ii, 214), that the real grievance of Fénelon's ecclesiastical opponents was the tendency of his mysticism to withdraw devotees from ceremonial duties.

[3] Now remembered chiefly through the account of his intercourse with Fénelon (repr. in Didot ed. of Fénelon's misc. works), and Hume's long extract from his *Philosophical Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion* in the concluding note to the *Essays*. Cp. M. Matter, *Le Mysticisme en France au temps de Fénelon*, 1865, pp. 352–54.

spirit of criticism was not likely to slacken. Literary polemic, indeed, was hardly to be thought of at such a time, even if it had been safe. In 1709 the king destroyed the Jansenist seminary of Port Royal, wreaking an ignoble vengeance on the very bones of the dead there buried; and more heretical thinkers had need go warily.

Yet even in those years of calamity, perhaps by reason of the very stress of it, some freethinking books somehow passed the press, though a system of police espionage had been built up by the king, step for step with some real reforms in the municipal government of Paris. The first was a romance of the favourite type, in which a traveller discovers a strange land inhabited by surprisingly rational people. Such appear to have been the *Histoire de Calejava*, by Claude Gilbert, produced at Dijon in 1700, and the imaginary travels of Juan de Posos, published at Amsterdam in 1708. Both of these were promptly suppressed; the next contrived to get into circulation. The work of Symon Tyssot de Patot, *Voyages et Avantures de Jacques Massé*, published in 1710, puts in the mouths of priests of the imaginary land discovered by the traveller such mordant arguments against the idea of a resurrection, the story of the fall, and other items of the Christian creed, that there could be small question of the deism of the author;[1] and the prefatory *Lettre de l'éditeur* indicates misgivings. The *Réflexions sur les grands hommes qui sont morts en plaisantant*, by Deslandes, ostensibly published at Amsterdam in 1712, seems to have had a precarious circulation, inasmuch as Brunet never saw the first edition. To permit of the issue of such a book as *Jacques Massé*—even at Bordeaux—the censure must have been notably lax; as it was again in the year of the king's death, when there appeared a translation of Collins's *Discourse of Freethinking*. For the moment the Government was occupied over an insensate renewal of the old persecution of Protestants, promulgating in 1715 a decree that all who died after refusing the sacraments should be refused burial, and that their goods should be confiscated. The edict seems to have been in large measure disregarded.

2. At the same time the continuous output of apologetics testified to the gathering tide of unbelief. The Benedictine Lami followed up his attack on Spinoza with a more popular treatise, *L'Incrédule amené à la religion par la raison* (1710); the Abbé Genest turned Descartes into verse by way of *Preuves naturelles de l'existence de*

[1] Tyssot de Patot was Professor of Mathematics at Deventer. In his *Lettres choisies*, published in 1726, there is an avowal that "he might be charged with having different notions from those of the vulgar in point of religion" (*New Memoirs of Literature*, iv (1726), 267); and his accounts of pietists and unbelieving and other priests sufficiently convey that impression (*id.* pp. 268–84).

Dieu et de l'immortalité de l'âme (1716); and the *Anti-Lucretius* of Cardinal Polignac (1661–1741), though only posthumously published in full (1745), did but pass on to the next age, when deism was the prevailing heresy, a deistic argument against atheism. It is difficult to see any Christian sentiment in that dialectic performance of a born diplomatist.[1]

When the old king died, even the fashion of conformity passed away among the upper classes;[2] and the feverish manufacture of apologetic works testifies to an unslackened activity of unbelief. In 1719 Jean Denyse, professor of philosophy at the college of Montaigu, produced *La vérité de la religion chrétienne demontrée par ordre géométrique* (a title apparently suggested by Spinoza's early exposition of Descartes), without making any permanent impression on heterodox opinion. Not more successful, apparently, was the performance of the Abbé Houteville, first published in 1722.[3] Much more amiable in tone, and more scientific in temper, than the common run of defences, it was found, says an orthodox biographical dictionary, to be "better fitted to make unbelievers than to convert them," seeing that "objections were presented with much force and fulness, and the replies with more amenity than weight."[4] That the Abbé was in fact not rigorously orthodox might almost be suspected from his having been appointed, in the last year of his life (1742), "perpetual secretary" to the Académie, an office which somehow tended to fall to more or less freethinking members, being held before him by the Abbé Dubos, and after him by Mirabaud, the Abbé Duclos,[5] D'Alembert, and Marmontel. The *Traités des Premières Veritéz* of the Jesuit Father Buffier (1724) can hardly have been more helpful to the faith.[6] Another experiment by way of popularizing orthodoxy, the copious *Histoire du peuple de Dieu*, by the Jesuit Berruyer, first published in 1728,[7] had little better fortune,

[1] Towards the close of his "poem" Polignac speaks of a defence of Christianity as a future task. He died without even completing the *Anti-Lucretius*, begun half a century before. Of him are related two classic anecdotes. Sent at the age of twenty-seven to discuss Church questions with the Pope, he earned from His Holiness the compliment: "You seem always to be of my opinion; and in the end it is yours that prevails." Louis XIV gave him a long audience, after which the King said: "I have had an interview with a young man who has constantly contradicted me without my being able to be angry for a moment." (*Éloge* prefixed to Bougainville's trans., *L'Anti-Lucrèce*, 1767, i, 131.)

[2] Cp. Duvernet, *Vie de Voltaire*, ch. i. Rivarol (*Lettres à Necker*, in *Œuvres*, ed. 1852, p. 138) wrote that under Louis XV there began a "general insurrection" of discussion, and that everybody then talked "only of religion and philosophy during half a century." But this exaggerates the beginnings, of which Rivarol could have no exact knowledge.

[3] *La verité de la religion chrétienne prouvée par les faits: précédée d'un discours historique et critique sur la méthode des principaux auteurs qui ont écrit pour et contre le christianisme depuis son origine*, 1722. Rep. 1741, 3 vols. 4to., 4 vols. 12mo.

[4] *Nouveau Dictionnaire historique portatif*, 1771, art. HOUTEVILLE, tom. ii.

[5] Whose *Considérations sur les Mœurs* (1751) does not seem to contain a single religious sentiment. Historiographer of France, he had not escaped the suppression of his *Histoire de Louis XI*, 1745.

[6] See above, p. 130. Buffier seems to have begun an attempt at spelling reform (by dropping doubled letters), followed in 1725 by Huard and later by Prémontval.

[7] 7 vols. 4to., 10 vols. 12mo. Rep. with corrections 1733. Seconde partie, 1753, 8 vols. 12mo.

inasmuch as it scandalized the orthodox by its secularity of tone without persuading the freethinkers. Condemned by the Bishop of Montpellier in 1731, it was censured by Rome in 1734; and the second part, produced long afterwards, aroused even more antagonism.

3. There was thus no adaptation on the side of the Church to the forces which in an increasing degree menaced her rule. Under the regency of Orléans (1715–1723), the open disorder of the court on the one hand and the ruin of the disastrous financial experiment of Law on the other were at least favourable to toleration; but under the Duc de Bourbon, put in power and soon superseded by Fleury (bishop of Fréjus and tutor of Louis XV; later cardinal) there was a renewal of the rigours against the Protestants and the Jansenists; the edict of 1715 was renewed; emigration recommenced; and only public outcry checked the policy of persecution on that side. But Fleury and the king went on fighting the Jansenists; and while this embittered strife of the religious sections could not but favour the growth of freethought, it was incompatible alike with official tolerance of unbelief and with any effectual diffusion of liberal culture. Had the terrorism and the waste of Louis XIV been followed by a sane system of finance and one of religious toleration; and had not the exhausted and bankrupt country been kept for another half century—save for eight years of peace and prosperity from 1748 to 1755—on the rack of ruinous wars, alike under the regency of Orléans and the rule of Louis XV, the intellectual life might have gone fast and far. As it was, war after war absorbed its energy; and the debt of five milliards left by Louis XIV was never seriously lightened. Under such a system the vestiges of constitutional government were gradually swept away.

4. As the new intellectual movement began to find expression, then, it found the forces of resistance more and more organized. In particular, the autocracy long maintained the severest checks on printing, so that freethought could not save by a rare chance attain to open speech. Any book with the least tendency to rationalism had to seek printers, or at least publishers, in Holland. Huard, in publishing his anonymous translation of the *Hypotyposes* of Sextus Empiricus (1725), is careful to say in his preface that he "makes no application of the Pyrrhonian objections to any dogma that may be called theological"; but he goes on to add that the scandalous quarrels of Christian sects are well fitted to confirm Pyrrhonists in their doubts, the sects having no solid ground on which to condemn each other. As such an assertion was rank heresy, the translation

had to be issued in Amsterdam, and even there without a publisher's name.[1] And still it remains clear that the age of Louis XIV had passed on to the next a heritage of hidden freethinking, as well as one of debt and misgovernment. What takes place thereafter is rather an evolution of and a clerical resistance to a growth known to have begun previously, and always feared and hated, than any new planting of unbelief in orthodox soil. As we have seen, indeed, a part of the early work of skepticism was done by distinguished apologists. Huet, dying in 1722, left for posthumous publication his *Traité philosophique de la faiblesse de l'esprit humain* (1723). It was immediately translated into English and German; and though it was probably found somewhat superfluous in deistic England, and supersubtle in Lutheran Germany, it helped to prepare the ground for the active unbelief of the next generation in France.

5. A continuous development may be traced throughout the century. MONTESQUIEU, who in his early *Persian Letters* (1721) had revealed himself as "fundamentally irreligious"[2] and a censor of intolerance,[3] proceeded in his masterly little book on the *Greatness and Decadence of the Romans* (1734) and his famous *Spirit of Laws* (1748) to treat the problems of human history in an absolutely secular and scientific spirit, making only such conventional allusions to religion as were advisable in an age in which all heretical works were suppressible.[4] The attempts of La Harpe and Villemain[5] to establish the inference that he repented his youthful levity in the *Persian Letters*, and recognized in Christianity the main pillar of society, will not bear examination. The very passages on which they found[6] are entirely secular in tone and purpose, and tell of no belief.[7] So late as 1751 there appeared a work, *Les Lettres Persanes convaincues d'impiété*, by the Abbé Gaultier. The election of Montesquieu was in fact the beginning of the struggle between the *Philosophe* party in the Academy and their opponents;[8] and in

[1] A reprint in 1735 bears the imprint of London, with the note "Aux dépens de la Compagnie."

[2] Lanson, p. 702. The *Persian Letters*, like the *Provincial Letters* of Pascal, had to be printed at Rouen and published at Amsterdam. Their freethinking expressions put considerable difficulties in the way of his election (1727) to the Academy. See E. Edwards, *Chapters of the Biog. Hist. of the French Academy*, 1864, pp. 34-35, and D. M. Robertson, *Hist. of the French Academy*, 1910, p. 92, as to the mystification about the alleged reprint without the obnoxious passages.

[3] Lettre 86.

[4] "Au point de vue religieux, Montesquieu tirait poliment son coup de chapeau au christianisme" (Lanson, p. 714). *E.g.* in the *Esprit des Lois*, liv. xxiv, chs. i, ii, iii, iv, vi, and the footnote to ch. x of liv. xxv. Montesquieu's letter to Warburton (16 mai, 1754), in acknowledgment of that prelate's attack on the posthumous works of Bolingbroke, is a sample of his social make-believe. But no religious reader could suppose it to come from a religious man.

[5] Also of E. Edwards, as cited above.

[6] See the notes cited on pp. 405, 407 of Garnier's variorum ed. of the *Esprit des Lois*, 1871. La Harpe and Villemain seem blind to irony.

[7] The flings at Bayle (liv. xxiv, chs. ii, vi) are part of a subtly ironical vindication of ideal as against ecclesiastical Christianity, and they have no note of faith.

[8] Paul Mesnard, *Hist. de l'académie française*, 1857, pp. 61-63.

his own day there was never much doubt about Montesquieu's deism. In his posthumous *Pensées* his anti-clericalism is sufficiently emphatic. "Churchmen," he writes, "are interested in keeping the people ignorant." He expresses himself as a convinced deist, and, with no great air of conviction, as a believer in immortality. But there his faith ends. "I call piety," he says, "a malady of the heart, which plants in the soul a malady of the most ineradicable kind." "The false notion of miracles comes of our vanity, which makes us believe we are important enough for the Supreme Being to upset Nature on our behalf." "Three incredibilities among incredibilities: the pure mechanism of animals [the doctrine of Descartes]; passive obedience; and the infallibility of the Pope."[1] His heresy was of course divined by the guardians of the faith, through all his panegyric of it. Even in his lifetime, Jesuits and Jansenists combined to attack the *Spirit of Laws*, which was denounced at an assembly of the clergy, put on the Roman Index, and prohibited by the censure until Malesherbes came into office in 1750.[2] The Count de Cataneo, a Venetian noble in the service of the King of Prussia, published in French about 1751 a treatise on *The Source, the Strength, and the True Spirit of Laws*,[3] in which the political rationalism and the ethical utilitarianism of Cumberland and Grotius were alike repelled as irreconcilable with the doctrine of revelation. It was doubtless because of this atmosphere of hostility that on the death of Montesquieu at Paris, in 1755, Diderot was the only man of letters who attended his funeral,[4] though the Académie performed a commemorative service.[5] Nevertheless, Montesquieu was throughout his life a figure in "good society," and suffered no molestation apart from the outcry against his books. He lived under a tradition of private freethinking and public clericalism, even as did Molière in the previous century; and where the two traditions had to clash, as at interment, the clerical dominion affirmed itself. But even in the Church there were always successors of Gassendi, to wit, philosophic unbelievers, as well as quiet friends of toleration. And it was given to an obscure Churchman to show the way of freethought to a generation of lay combatants.

[1] *Pensées Diverses: De la religion.* [2] Lanson, p. 714, *note.*

[3] Tr. in English, 1753. It is noteworthy that Cataneo formally accepts Montesquieu's professions of orthodoxy.

[4] *Correspondance littéraire de Grimm et Diderot*, ed. 1829–31, i, 273. See the footnote for an account of the indecent efforts of the Jesuits to get at the dying philosopher. The curé of the parish who was allowed entry began his exhortation with: "Vous savez, M. le Président, combien Dieu est grand." "Oui, monsieur," returned Montesquieu, "et combien les hommes sont petits."

[5] Mesnard, *Hist. de l'académie française*, p. 63.

6. One of the most comprehensive freethinking works of the century, the *Testament* of JEAN MESLIER, curé of Etrépigny, in Champagne (d. 1723, 1729, or 1733), though it inspired numbers of eighteenth-century freethinkers who read it in manuscript, was never printed till 1861–64. It deserves here some special notice.[1] At his death, by common account, Meslier left two autograph copies of his book, after having deposited a third copy in the archives of the jurisdiction of Sainte-Menehould. By a strange chance one was permitted to circulate, and ultimately there were some hundred copies in Paris, selling at ten louis apiece. As he told on the wrapper of the copy he left for his parishioners, he had not dared to speak out during his life; but he had made full amends. He is recorded to have been an exceptionally charitable priest, devoted to his parishioners, whose interests he indignantly championed against a tyrannous lord of the manor;[2] apropos of Descartes's doctrine of animal automatism, which he fiercely repudiates, he denounces with deep feeling all cruelty to animals, at whose slaughter for food he winces; and his book reveals him as a man profoundly impressed at once by the sufferings of the people under heartless kings and nobles, and the immense imposture of religion which, in his eyes, maintained the whole evil system. Some men before him had impugned miracles, some the gospels, some dogma, some the conception of deity, some the tyranny of kings. He impugns all; and where nearly all the deists had eulogized the character of the Gospel Jesus, the priest envelops it in his harshest invective.

He must have written during whole years, with a sombre, invincible patience, dumbly building up, in his lonely leisure, his unfaltering negation of all that the men around him held for sacred, and that he was sworn to preach—the whole to be his testament to his parishioners. In the slow, heavy style—the style of a cart horse, Voltaire called it—there is an indubitable sincerity, a smouldering passion, but no haste, no explosion. The long-drawn, formless, prolix sentences say everything that can be said on their theme; and when the long book was done it was slowly copied, and yet again copied, by the same heavy, unwearying hand. He had read few books, it seems—only the Bible, some of the Fathers, Montaigne, the "Turkish Spy," Naudé, Charron, Pliny, Tournémine on atheism, and Fénelon on the existence of God, with some history, and Moreri's

[1] A full analysis is given by Strauss in the second Appendix to his *Voltaire: Sechs Vorträge*, 2te Aufl. 1870.

[2] The details are dubious. See the memoir compiled by "Rudolf Charles" (R. C. D'Ablaing van Giessenburg), the editor of the *Testament*, Amsterdam, 3 tom. 1861–64. It draws chiefly on the *Mémoires secrets de Bachaumont*, under date Sept. 30, 1764.

Dictionary; but he had re-read them often. He does not cite Bayle; and Montaigne is evidently his chief master. But on his modest reading he had reached as absolute a conviction of the untruth of the entire Judæo-Christian religion as any freethinker ever had. Moved above all by his sense of the corruption and misrule around him, he sets out with a twofold indictment against religion and government, of which each part sustains the other, and he tells his parishioners how he had been "hundreds of times"[1] on the point of bursting out with an indignant avowal of his contempt for the rites he was compelled to administer, and the superstitions he had to inculcate. Then, in a grimly-planned order, he proceeds to demolish, section by section, the whole structure.

Religions in general he exhibits as tissues of error, illusion, and imposture, the endless sources of troubles and strifes for men. Their historical proofs and documentary bases are then assailed, and the gospels in particular are ground between the slow mill-stones of his dialectic; miracles, promises, and prophecies being handled in turn. The ethic and the doctrine are next assailed all along the line, from their theoretic bases to their political results; and the kings of France fare no better than their creed. As against the theistic argument of Fénelon, the entire theistic system is then oppugned, sometimes with precarious erudition, generally with cumbrous but solid reasoning; and the eternity of matter is affirmed with more than Averroïstic conviction, the Cartesians coming in for a long series of heavy blows. Immortality is further denied, as miracles had been; and the treatise ends with a stern affirmation of its author's rectitude, and, as it were, a massive gesture of contempt for all that will be said against him when he has passed into the nothingness which he is nearing. "I have never committed any crime," he writes,[2] "nor any bad or malicious action: I defy any man to make me on this head, with justice, any serious reproach"; but he quotes from the Psalms, with grim zest, phrases of hate towards workers of iniquity. There is not even the hint of a smile at the astonishing bequest he was laying up for his parishioners and his country. He was sure he would be read, and he was right. The whole polemic of the next sixty years, the indictment of the government no less than that of the creed, is laid out in his sombre treatise.

To the general public, however, he was never known save by the "Extract"—really a deistic adaptation—made by Voltaire,[3] and the

[1] *Testament*, as cited, i, 25. [2] iii, 396.

[3] First published in 1762 [or 1764? See Bachaumont, Oct. 30], with the date 1742; and reprinted in the *Évangile de la Raison*, 1764. It was no fewer than four times ordered to be destroyed in the Restoration period.

re-written summary by d'Holbach and Diderot entitled *Le Bon Sens du Curé Meslier* (1772).[1] Even this publicity was delayed for a generation, since Voltaire, who heard of the Testament as early as 1735, seems to have made no use of it till 1762. But the entire group of fighting freethinkers of the age was in some sense inspired by the old priest's legacy.

7. Apart from this direct influence, too, others of the cloth bore some part in the general process of enlightenment. A good type of the agnostic priest of the period was the Abbé Terrasson, the author of the philosophic romance *Sethos* (1732), who died in 1750. Not very judicious in his theory of human evolution (which he represented as a continuous growth from a stage of literary infancy, seen in Homer), he adopted the Newtonian theory at a time when the entire Academy stood by Cartesianism. Among his friends he tranquilly avowed his atheism.[2] He died "without the sacraments," and when asked whether he believed all the doctrine of the Church, he replied that for him that was not possible.[3] Another anti-clerical Abbé was Gaidi, whose poem, *La Religion à l'Assemblé du Clergé de France* (1762), was condemned to be burned.[4]

Among or alongside of such disillusioned Churchmen there must have been a certain number who, desiring no breach with the organization to which they belonged, saw the fatal tendency of the spirit of persecution upon which its rulers always fell back in their struggle with freethought, and sought to open their eyes to the folly and futility of their course. Freethinkers, of course, had to lead the way, as we have seen. It was the young Turgot who in 1753 published two powerful *Lettres sur la tolérance*, and in 1754 a further series of admirable *Lettres d'un ecclésiastique à un magistrat*, pleading the same cause.[5] But similar appeals were anonymously made, by a clerical pen, at a moment when the Church was about to enter on a new and exasperating conflict with the growing band of freethinking writers who rallied round Voltaire. The small book of *Questions sur la tolérance*, ascribed to the Abbé Tailhé or Tailhié and the canonist Maultrot (Geneva, 1758), is conceived in the very spirit of rationalism, yet with a careful concern to persuade the clergy to sane courses, and is to this day worth reading as a utilitarian argument. But the

[1] Probably Diderot did the most of the adaptation. "Il y a plus que du bon sens dans ce livre," writes Voltaire to D'Alembert; "il est terrible. S'il sort de la boutique du *Système de la Nature*, l'auteur s'est bien perfectionné" (Lettre de 27 Juillet, 1775).

[2] "Il leur faut un Être à ces messieurs; pour moi, je m'en passe." Grimm, *Correspondance Littéraire*, ed. 1829-31, iv, 186.

[3] Grimm, as cited, i, 235. Grimm tells a delightful story of his reception of the confessor.

[4] "Cet ouvrage, dont les vers sont grands et bien tournés, est une satire des plus licencieuses contre les mœurs de nos évêques." Bachaumont, *Mémoires Secrets*, Juin 15, 1762.

[5] Bonet-Maury, *Hist. de la lib. de conscience en France*, 1900, p. 68.

Church was not fated to be led by such light. The principle of toleration was left to become the watchword of freethought, while the Church identified herself collectively with that of tyranny.

Anecdotes of the time reveal the coincidence of tyranny and evasion, intolerance and defiance. Of Nicolas Boindin (1676–1751), procureur in the royal Bureau des Finances, who was received into the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres in 1706, it is told that he "would have been received in the French Academy if the public profession he made of being an atheist had not excluded him."[1] But the publicity was guarded. When he conversed with the young Marmontel[2] and others at the Café Procope, they used a conversational code in which the soul was called *Margot*, religion *Javotte*, liberty *Jeanneton*, and the deity *Monsieur de l'Être*. Once a listener of furtive aspect asked Boindin who might be this Monsieur de l'Être who behaved so ill, and with whom they were so displeased? "Monsieur," replied Boindin, "he is a police spy"—such being the avocation of the questioner.[3] "The morals of Boindin," says a biographical dictionary of the period, "were as pure as those of an atheist can be; his heart was generous; but to these virtues he joined presumption and the obstinacy which follows from it, a *bizarre* humour, and an unsociable character."[4] Other testimonies occur on the first two heads, not on the last. But he was fittingly refused "Christian" interment, and was buried by night, "sans pompe."

8. With the ground prepared as we have seen, freethought was bound to progress in France in the age of Louis XV; but it chanced that the lead fell into the hands of the most brilliant and fecund of all the writers of the century. VOLTAIRE[5] (1694–1778) was already something of a freethinker when a mere child. So common was deism already become in Paris at the end of the seventeenth century that his godfather, an abbé, is said to have taught him, at the age of three, a poem by J. B. ROUSSEAU,[6] then privately circulated, in which Moses in particular and religious revelations in general are derided as fraudulent.[7] Knowing this poem by heart in his child-

[1] *Nouveau dictionnaire historique-portatif*.....par une Société de Gens de Lettres, ed. 1771, i, 314.

[2] Marmontel does not relate this in his *Mémoires*, where he insists on the decorum of the talk, even at d'Holbach's table. [3] Chamfort, *Caractères et Anecdotes*.

[4] *Nouveau dictionnaire*, above cited, i, 315.

[5] Name assumed for literary purposes, and probably composed by anagram from the real name AROUET, with "le jeune" (junior) added, thus: A. R. O. V. E. T. L (e). I (eune).

[6] Not to be confounded with the greater and later Jean Jacques Rousseau. J. B. Rousseau became Voltaire's bitter enemy—on the score, it is said, of the young man's epigram on the elder poet's "Ode to Posterity," which, he said, would not reach its address. Himself a rather ribald freethinker, Rousseau professed to be outraged by the irreligion of Voltaire.

[7] See the poem in note 4 to ch. ii of Duvernet's *Vie de Voltaire*. Duvernet calls it "one of the first attacks on which philosophy in France had ventured against superstition" (*Vie de Voltaire*, ed. 1797, p. 19).

hood, the boy was well on the way to his life's work. It is on record that many of his school-fellows were, like himself, already deists, though his brother, a juvenile Jansenist, made vows to propitiate the deity on the small unbeliever's behalf.[1] It may have been a general reputation for audacious thinking that led to his being charged with the authorship of a stinging philippic published in 1715, after the death of Louis XIV. The unknown author, a young man, enumerated the manifold abuses and iniquities of the reign, concluding: "I have seen all these, and I am not twenty years old." Voltaire was then twenty-two; but D'Argenson, who in the poem had been called "the enemy of the human race," finding no likelier author for the verses, put him under surveillance and exiled him from Paris; and on his imprudent return imprisoned him for nearly a year in the Bastille (1716), releasing him only when the real author of the verses avowed himself. Unconquerable then as always, Voltaire devoted himself in prison to his literary ambitions, planning his *Henriade* and completing his *Œdipe*, which was produced in 1718 with signal success.

Voltaire was thus already a distinguished young poet and dramatist when, in 1726, after enduring the affronts of an assault by a nobleman's lacqueys, and of imprisonment in the Bastille for seeking amends by duel, he came to England, where, like Deslandes before him, he met with a ready welcome from the freethinkers.[2] Four years previously, in the powerful poem, *For and Against*,[3] he had put his early deistic conviction in a vehement impeachment of the immoral creed of salvation and damnation, making the declaration, "I am not a Christian." Thus what he had to learn in England was not deism, but the physics of Newton and the details of the deist campaign against revelationism; and these he mastered.[4] Not only was he directly and powerfully influenced by Bolingbroke, who became his intimate friend, but he read widely in the philo-

[1] Duvernet, ch. ii. The free-hearted NINON DE L'ENCLOS, brightest of old ladies, is to be numbered among the pre-Voltairean freethinkers, and to be remembered as leaving young Voltaire a legacy to buy books. She refused to "sell her soul" by turning dévote on the invitation of her old friend Madame de Maintenon. Madame D'Épinay, Voltaire's "belle philosophe et aimable Habacuc," Madame du Deffand, and Madame Geoffrin were among the later freethinking *grandes dames* of the Voltairean period; and so, presumably, was the Madame de Créqui, quoted by Rivarol, who remarked that "Providence" is "the baptismal name of Chance." As to Madame Geoffrin see the *Œuvres Posthumes de D'Alembert*, 1799, i, 240, 271; and the *Mémoires de Marmontel*, 1804, ii, 102 *sq.* If Marmontel is accurate, she went secretly at times to mass (p. 104).

[2] Deslandes wrote some new chapters of his *Réflexions* in London, for the English translation. Eng. tr. 1713, p. 99.

[3] *Pour et Contre, ou Épitre à Uranie.* It was of course not printed till long afterwards. Diderot, writing his *Promenade du Sceptique* in 1747, says: "C'est, je crois, dans l'allée des fleurs [of his allegory] entre le champagne et le tokay, que l'épitre à Uranie prit naissance." (*L'Allée des Marronniers*, ad init.) This seems unjust.

[4] He has been alternately represented as owing everything and owing very little to England. Cp. Texte, *Rousseau and the Cosmopolitan Spirit*, Eng. tr. p. 58. Neither view is just.

sophic, scientific, and deistic English literature of the day,[1] and went back to France, after three years' stay, not only equipped for his ultimate battle with tyrannous religion, but deeply impressed by the moral wholesomeness of free discussion.[2] Not all at once, indeed, did he become the mouthpiece of critical reason for his age: his literary ambitions were primarily on the lines of *belles lettres*, and secondarily on those of historical writing. After his *Pour et Contre*, his first freethinking production was the not very heretical *Lettres philosophiques* or *Lettres anglaises*, written in England in 1728, and, after circulating in MS., published in five editions in 1734; and the official burning of the book by the common hangman, followed by the imprisonment of the bookseller in the Bastille,[3] was a sufficient check on such activity for the time. Save for the jests about Adam and Eve in the *Mondain* (1736), a slight satire for which he had to fly from Paris; and the indirect though effective thrusts at bigotry in the *Ligue* (1723; later the *Henriade*); in the tragedy of *Mahomet* (1739; printed in 1742), in the tales of *Memnon* and *Zadig* (1747–48), and in the *Idées de La Mothe le Vayer* (1751) and the *Défense de Milord Bolingbroke* (1752), he produced nothing else markedly deistic till 1755, when he published the "Poem to the King of Prussia," otherwise named *Sur la loi naturelle* (which appears to have been written in 1751, while he was on a visit to the Margravine of Bayreuth), and that on the Earthquake of Lisbon. So definitely did the former poem base all morality on natural principles that it was ordered to be burned by the Parlement of Paris, then equally alarmed at freethinking and at Molinism.[4] And so impossible was it still in France to print any specific criticism of Christianity that when in 1759 he issued his verse translations of the Song of Solomon and Ecclesiastes they also were publicly burned, though he had actually softened instead of heightening the eroticism of the first and the "materialism" of the second.[5]

9. It is thus a complete mistake on the part of Buckle to affirm that the activity of the French reformers up to 1750 was directed

[1] In his *Essay upon the Civil Wars of France, and.....upon Epick Poetry* (2nd ed. 1728, "corrected by himself"), written and published in English, he begins his "Advertisement" with the remark: "It has the appearance of too great a presumption in a traveller who hath been but eighteen months in England, to attempt to write in a language which he cannot pronounce at all, and which he hardly understands in conversation." As the book is remarkably well written, he must have read much English.

[2] Lord Morley (*Voltaire*, 4th ed. p. 40) speaks of the English people as having then won "a full liberty of thought and speech and person." This, as we have seen, somewhat overstates the case. But discussion was much more nearly free than in France.

[3] Probably as much on political as on religious grounds. The 8th letter, *Sur le Parlement*, must have been very offensive to the French Government; and in 1739, moved by angry criticisms, Voltaire saw fit to modify its language. See Lanson's ed. of the *Lettres*, 1909, i, 92, 110.

[4] Condorcet, *Vie de Voltaire*, ed. 1792, p. 92. In reprints the poem was entitled *Sur la religion naturelle*, and was so commonly cited.

[5] Condorcet, p. 99.

against religion, and that it was thereafter turned against the State. Certainly there was much freethinking among instructed men and others, but it proceeded, as under Louis XIV, mainly by way of manuscripts and conversation, or at best by the circulation of English books and a few translations of these; and only guardedly before 1745 by means of published French books.[1] The Abbé Ranchon, in his MS. Life of Cardinal Fleury, truly says that "the time of the Regency was a period of the spirit of dissoluteness and irreligion"; but when he ascribes to "those times" many "licentious and destructive writings" he can specify only those of the English deists. "Precisely in the time of the Regency a multitude of those offensive and irreligious books were brought over the sea: France was deluged with them."[2] It is incredible that multitudes of Frenchmen read English in the days of the Regency. French freethinkers like Saint Evremond and Deslandes, who visited or sojourned in London before 1715, took their freethought there with them; and the only translations then in print were those of Collins's *Discourse of Freethinking* and Shaftesbury's essays on the Use of Ridicule and on Enthusiasm. Apart from these, the only known French freethinking book of the Regency period was the work of Vroes, a councillor at the court of Brabant, on the *Spirit of Spinoza*, reprinted as *Des trois imposteurs*. Meslier died not earlier than 1729; the *Histoire de la philosophie payenne* of Burigny belongs to 1724; the *Lettres philosophiques* of Voltaire to 1734; the earlier works of d'Argens to 1737–38; the *Nouvelles libertés de penser*, edited by Dumarsais, to 1743; and the militant treatise of De la Serre, best known as the *Examen de la Religion*, to 1745.

The ferment thus kept up was indeed so great that about 1748 the ecclesiastical authorities decided on the remarkable step of adopting for their purposes the apologetic treatise adapted by Jacob Vernet, professor of *belles lettres* at Geneva, from the works of Jean-Alphonse Turrettin,[3] not only a Protestant but a substantially Socinian professor of ecclesiastical history at the same university. The treatise is itself a testimony to the advance of rationalism in the Protestant world; and its adoption, even under correction, by the Catholic Church in France tells of a keen consciousness of

[1] See above, pp. 213-14, as to the works of Boulainvilliers, Tyssot de Patot, Deslandes, and others who wrote between 1700 and 1715.

[2] Cited by Schlosser, *Hist. of the Eighteenth Century*, Eng. tr. i, 146–47.

[3] *Traité de la verité de la religion chrétienne*, tiré en partie du latin de M. J. Alphonse Turrettin, professeur.....en l'académie de Génève, par M. J. Vernet, professeur de belles-lettres en la même Académie. Revue et corrigé par un Théologien Catholique. 1e éd. Génève, 1730. Rep. in 2 tom. 1753. Ecclesiastical approbation given 15 janv. 1749; privilège, juillet, 1751.

need. But the dreaded advance, as we have seen, was only to a small extent yet traceable by new literature. The *Examen critique des apologistes de la religion chrétienne* of Lévesque de Burigny was probably written about 1732, and then and thereafter circulated in manuscript, but it was not published till 1766; and even in manuscript its circulation was probably small, though various apologetic works had testified to the increasing uneasiness of the orthodox world. Such titles as *La religion chrétienne demontrée par la Resurrection* (by Armand de la Chapelle, 1728) and *La religion chrétienne prouvée par l'accomplissement des prophéties* (by Père Baltus, 1728) tell of private unbelief under the Regency. In 1737 appeared the voluminous treatise (anonymous) of the Abbé de la Chambre, *Traité de la véritable religion contre les athées, les déistes, etc.* (5 vols.). In 1747, again, there appeared a learned, laborious, and unintelligent work in three volumes (authorized in 1742), *Le Libertinage combattu par la témoignage des auteurs profanes*, by an unnamed Benedictine[1] of the Congregation of St. Vanne. It declares that, between atheism and deism, there has never been so much unbelief as now; but it cites no modern books, and is devoted to arraying classic arguments in support of theism and morals. Part of the exposition consists in showing that Epicurus, Lucian, and Euripides, whom modern atheists are wont to cite as their masters, were not and could not have been atheists; and the pious author roundly declares in favour of paganism as against atheism.

So much smoke tells of fire; but only in 1745 and 1746 did the printed *Examen* of De la Serre and the *Pensées philosophiques* of Diderot begin to build up in France the modern school of critical and philosophic deism. When in 1751 the Abbé Gauchat began his series of *Lettres critiques*, he set out by attacking Voltaire's *Lettres philosophiques*, Diderot's *Pensées philosophiques*, the anonymous *Discours sur la vie heureuse* (1748), *Les Mœurs*[2] (1748), and Pope's *Essay on Man;* taking up in his second volume the *Lettres Persanes* of Montesquieu (1721), and other sets of *Lettres* written in imitation of them. In the third volume he has nothing more aggressive of Voltaire's to deal with than *La Henriade*, the *Mahomet*, and some of his fugitive pieces. And the Bishop of Puy, writing in 1754 his *La Dévotion conciliée avec l'esprit*, could say to the faithful: "You live in an age fertile in pretended *esprits forts*, who, too weak nevertheless to attack in front an invincible religion, skirmish lightly around it, and in default of the reasons they lack,

[1] Dom Remi Desmonts, according to Barbier.
[2] "Par Panage" (=Toussaint?). Rep. 1755 and 1767 (Berlin).

employ raillery."[1] The chivalrous bishop knew perfectly well that had a serious attack been published author and publisher would have been sent if possible to the Bastille, if not to the scaffold. But his evidence is explicit. There is here no recognition of any literary bombardment, though there was certainly an abundance of unbelief.[2]

Buckle has probably mistaken the meaning of the summing up of some previous writer to the effect that up to 1750 or a few years later the political opposition to the Court was religious, in the sense of ecclesiastical or sectarian (Jansenist),[3] and that it afterwards turned to matters of public administration.[4] It would be truer to say that the early *Lettres philosophiques*, the reading of which later made the boy Lafayette a republican at nine, were a polemic for political and social freedom, and as such a more direct criticism of the French administrative system than Voltaire ever penned afterwards, save in the *Voix du Sage et du Peuple* (1750). In point of fact, as will be shown below, only some twenty scattered freethinking works had appeared in French up to 1745, almost none of them directly attacking Christian beliefs; and, despite the above-noted sallies of Voltaire, Condorcet comes to the general conclusion that it was the hardihood of Rousseau's deism in the "Confession of a Savoyard Vicar" in his *Émile* (1762) that spurred Voltaire to new activity.[5] This is perhaps not quite certain; there is some reason to believe that his "Sermon of the Fifty," his "first frontal attack on Christianity,"[6] was written a year before; but in any case that and other productions of his at once left Rousseau far in the rear. Even now he had no fixed purpose of continuous warfare against so powerful and cruel an enemy as the Church, which in 1757 had actually procured an edict pronouncing the death penalty against all writers of works attacking religion; though the fall of the Jesuits in 1764 raised new hopes of freedom. But when, after that hopeful episode, there began a new movement of Jansenist fanaticism; and when, after the age of religious savagery had seemed to be over, there began a new series of religious atrocities in France

[1] Work cited, ed. 1755, p. 252.

[2] A glimpse of old Paris before or about 1750 is afforded by Fontenelle's remark that the prevailing diseases might be known from the *affiches*. At every street corner were to be seen two, of which one advertised a *Traité sur l'incrédulité*. (Grimm, *Corr. litt.* iii. 373.)

[3] Thus Duruy had said in his *Histoire de France* (1st ed. 1852) that in the work of the Jansenists of Port Royal "l'esprit d'opposition politique se cacha sous l'opposition religieuse" (ed. 1880, ii, 298).

[4] The case has been thus correctly put by M. Rocquain, who, however, decides that "de religieuse qu'elle était, l'opposition devient politique" as early as about 1724–1733. *L'Esprit révolutionnaire avant la révolution*, 1878; *table des matières*, liv. 2e. Duruy (last note) puts the tendency still earlier.

[5] "Cette hardiesse étonna Voltaire, et excita son émulation" (ed. cited, p. 118).

[6] *Avertissement des éditeurs*, in Basle ed. of 1792, vol. xlv, p. 92.

itself (1762–66), he girded on a sword that was not to be laid down till his death.

Even so late as 1768, in his last letter to Damilaville (8 fév.), Voltaire expresses a revulsion against the aggressive freethought propaganda of the time which is either one of his epistolary stratagems or the expression of a nervous reaction in a time of protracted bad health. "Mes chagrins redoublent," he writes, "par la quantité incroyable d'écrits contre la religion chrétienne, qui se succédent aussi rapidement en Hollande que les gazettes et les journaux." His enemies have the barbarism to impute to him, at his age, "une partie de ces extravagances composées par de jeunes gens et par des moines défroqués." His immediate ground for chagrin may have been the fact that this outbreak of anti-Christian literature was likely to thwart him in the campaign he was then making to secure justice to the Sirven family as he had already vindicated that of Calas. Sirven barely missed the fate of the latter.

The misconception of Buckle, above discussed, has been widely shared even among students. Thus Lord Morley, discussing the "Creed of the Savoyard Vicar" in Rousseau's *Émile* (1762), writes that "Souls weary of the fierce mockeries that had so long been flying like fiery shafts against the far Jehovah of the Hebrews, and the silent Christ of the later doctors and dignitaries," may well have turned to it with ardour (*Rousseau*, ed. 1886, ii, 266). He further speaks of the "superiority of the sceptical parts of the Savoyard Vicar's profession.....over the biting mockeries which Voltaire had made the fashionable method of assault" (p. 294). No specifications are offered, and the chronology is seen to be astray. The only mockeries which Voltaire could be said to have made fashionable before 1760 were those of his *Lettres philosophiques*, his *Mondain*, his *Défense de Milord Bolingbroke*, and his philosophically humorous tales, as *Candide*, *Zadig*, *Micromégas*, etc.: all his distinctive attacks on Judaism and Christianity were yet to come. [The Abbé Guyon, in his *L'Oracle des nouveaux philosophes* (Berne, 1759–60, 2 tom.), proclaims an attack on doctrines taught "dans les livres de nos beaux esprits" (*Avert.* p. xi); but he specifies only denials of (1) revelation, (2) immortality, and (3) the Biblical account of man's creation; and he is largely occupied with Diderot's *Pensées philosophiques*, though his book is written at Voltaire. The second volume is devoted to *Candide* and the *Précis* of Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon—not very fierce performances.] Lord Morley, as it happens, does not make this chronological mistake in his earlier work on Voltaire, where he rightly represents him as beginning his attack on "the Infamous" after he had settled at Ferney (1758). His "fierce mockeries" begin at the earliest

in 1761. The mistake may have arisen through taking as true the fictitious date of 1736 for the writing of the *Examen Important de Milord Bolingbroke*. It belongs to 1767. Buckle's error, it may be noted, is repeated by so careful a student as Dr. Redlich, *Local Government in England*, Eng. tr. 1903, i, 64.

10. The rest of Voltaire's long life was a sleepless and dexterous warfare, by all manner of literary stratagem,[1] facilitated by vast literary fame and ample acquired wealth, against what he called "the Infamous"—the Church and the creed which he found still swift to slay for mere variation of belief, and slow to let any good thing be wrought for the bettering of men's lives. Of his prodigious literary performance it is probably within the truth to say that in respect of rapid influence on the general intelligence of the world it has never been equalled by any one man's writing; and that, whatever its measure of error and of personal misdirection, its broader influence was invariably for peace on earth, for tolerance among men, and for reason in all things. His faults were many, and some were serious; but to no other man of his age, save possibly Beccaria, can be attributed so much beneficent accomplishment. He can perhaps better be estimated as a force than as a man. So great was the area of his literary energy that he is inevitably inadequate at many points. Lessing could successfully impugn him in drama; Diderot in metaphysic; Gibbon in history; and it is noteworthy that all of these men[2] at different times criticized him with asperity, testing him by the given item of performance, and disparaging his personality. Yet in his own way he was a greater power than any of them; and his range, as distinguished from his depth, outgoes theirs. In sum, he was the greatest mental fighter of his age, perhaps of any age: in that aspect he is a "power-house" not to be matched in human history; and his polemic is mainly for good. It was a distinguished English academic who declared that "civilization owes more to Voltaire than to all the Fathers of the Church put

[1] It has been counted that he used no fewer than a hundred and thirty different pseudonyms; and the perpetual prosecution and confiscation of his books explains the procedure. As we have seen, the *Lettres philosophiques* (otherwise the *Lettres anglaises*) were burned on their appearance, in 1734, and the bookseller put in the Bastille; the *Recueil des pièces fugitives* was suppressed in 1739; the *Voix du Sage et du Peuple* was officially and clerically condemned in 1751; the poem on *Natural Law* was burned at Paris in 1758; *Candide* at Geneva in 1759; the *Dictionnaire philosophique* at Geneva in 1764, and at Paris in 1765; and many of his minor pseudonymous performances had the same advertisement. But even the *Henriade*, the *Charles XII*, and the first chapters of the *Siècle de Louis XIV* were prohibited; and in 1785 the thirty volumes published of the 1784 edition of his works were condemned *en masse*.

[2] Diderot, critique of *Le philosophe ignorant* in Grimm's *Corr. Litt.* 1 juin 1766; Lessing, *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, Stück 10-12, 15; Gibbon, ch. i, note near end; ch. li, note on siege of Damascus. Rousseau was as hostile as any (see Morley's *Rousseau*, ch. ix, § 1). But Rousseau's verdict is the least important, and the least judicial. He had himself earned the detestation of Voltaire, as of many other men. In a moment of pique, Diderot wrote of Voltaire: "Cet homme n'est que le second dans tous les genres" (Lettre 71 à Mdlle. Voland, 12 août, 1762). He forgot wit and humour!

together."[1] If in a literary way he hated his personal foes, much more did he hate cruelty and bigotry; and it was his work more than any that made impossible a repetition in Europe of such clerical crimes as the hanging of the Protestant pastor, La Rochette; the execution of the Protestant, Calas, on an unproved and absurdly false charge; the torture of his widow and children; the beheading of the lad La Barre for ill-proved blasphemy.[2] As against his many humanities, there is not to be charged on him one act of public malevolence. In his relations with his fickle admirer, FREDERICK THE GREAT, and with others of his fellow-thinkers, he and they painfully brought home to freethinkers the lesson that for them as for all men there is a personal art of life that has to be learned, over and above the rectification of opinion. But he and the others wrought immensely towards that liberation alike from unreason and from bondage which must precede any great improvement of human things.

Voltaire's constant burden was that religion was not only untrue but pernicious, and when he was not dramatically showing this of Christianity, as in his poem *La Ligue* (1723), he was saying it by implication in such plays as *Zaïre* (1732) and *Mahomet* (1742), dealing with the fanaticism of Islam; while in the *Essai sur les mœurs* (1756), really a broad survey of general history, and in the *Siècle de Louis XIV*, he applied the method of Montesquieu, with pungent criticism thrown in. Later, he added to his output direct criticisms of the Christian books, as in the *Examen important de Milord Bolingbroke* (1767), and the *Recherches historiques sur le Christianisme* (? 1769), continuing all his former lines of activity. Meanwhile, with the aid of his companion the MARQUISE DU CHATELET, an accomplished mathematician, he had done much to popularize the physics of Newton and discredit the scientific fallacies of the system of Descartes; all the while preaching a Newtonian but rather agnostic deism. This is the purport of his *Philosophe Ignorant*, his longest philosophical essay.[3] The destruction of Lisbon by the earthquake

[1] Prof. Jowett, of Balliol College. See L. A. Tollemache, *Benjamin Jowett, Master of Balliol*, 4th ed. pp. 27–28.

[2] See details in Lord Morley's *Voltaire*, 4th ed. pp. 165–70, 257–58. The erection by the French freethinkers of a monument to La Barre in 1905, opposite the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Montmartre, Paris, is an expression at once of the old feud with the Church and the French appreciation of high personal courage. La Barre was in truth something of a scapegrace, but his execution was an infamy, and he went to his death as to a bridal. The erection of the monument has been the occasion of a futile pretence on the clerical side that for La Barre's death the Church had no responsibility, the movers in the case being laymen. Nothing, apparently, can teach Catholic Churchmen that the Church's past sins ought to be confessed like those of individuals. It is quite true that it was a Parlement that condemned La Barre. But what a religious training was it that turned laymen into murderous fanatics!

[3] M. Lanson seems to overlook it when he writes (p. 747) that "the affirmation of God, the denial of Providence and miracles, is the whole metaphysic of Voltaire."

of 1755 seems to have shaken him in his deistic faith, since the upshot of his poem on that subject is to leave the moral government of the universe an absolute enigma; and in the later *Candide* (1759) he attacks theistic optimism with his matchless ridicule. Indeed, as early as 1749, in his *Traité de la Métaphysique*, written for the Marquise du Chatelet, he reaches virtually pantheistic positions in defence of the God-idea, declaring with Spinoza that deity can be neither good nor bad. But, like so many professed pantheists, he relapsed, and he never accepted the atheistic view; on the contrary, we find him arguing absurdly enough, in his *Homily on Atheism* (1765), that atheism had been the destruction of morality in Rome;[1] on the publication of d'Holbach's *System of Nature* in 1770 he threw off an article *Dieu : réponse au Système de la Nature*, where he argued on the old deistic lines; and his tale of *Jenni; or, the Sage and the Atheist* (1775), is a polemic on the same theme. By this time the inconsistent deism of his youth had itself been discredited among the more thoroughgoing freethinkers; and for years it had been said in one section of literary society that Voltaire after all "is a bigot; he is a deist!"[2]

But for freethinkers of all schools the supreme service of Voltaire lay in his twofold triumph over the spirit of religious persecution. He had contrived at once to make it hateful and to make it ridiculous; and it is a great theistic poet of our own day that has pronounced his blade the

> sharpest, shrewdest steel that ever stabbed
> To death Imposture through the armour joints.[3]

To be perfect, the tribute should have noted that he hated cruelty much more than imposture; and such is the note of the whole movement of which his name was the oriflamme. Voltaire personally was at once the most pugnacious and the most forgiving of men. Few of the Christians who hated him had so often as he fulfilled their own precept of returning good for evil to enemies; and none excelled him in hearty philanthropy. It is notable that most of the humanitarian ideas of the latter half of the century—the demand for the reform of criminal treatment, the denunciation of war and slavery, the insistence on good government, and toleration of all creeds—are

[1] Lord Morley writes (p. 209): "We do not know how far he ever seriously approached the question.....whether a society can exist without a religion." This overlooks both the *Homélie sur l'Athéisme* and the article Athéisme in the *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, where the question is discussed seriously and explicitly.

[2] Horace Walpole, Letter to Gray, Nov. 19, 1765. Compare the mordant criticism of Grimm (*Corr. litt.* vii, 54 *sq.*) on his tract *Dieu* in reply to d'Holbach. "Il raisonne là-dessus comme un enfant," writes Grimm, "mais comme un joli enfant qu'il est."

[3] Browning, *The Two Poets of Croisic*, st. cvii.

more definitely associated with the freethinking than with any religious party, excepting perhaps the laudable but uninfluential sect of Quakers.

The character of Voltaire is still the subject of chronic debate; but the old deadlock of laudation and abuse is being solved in a critical recognition of him as a man of genius flawed by the instability which genius so commonly involves. Carlyle (that model of serenity), while dwelling on his perpetual perturbations, half-humanely suggests that we should think of him as one constantly hag-ridden by maladies of many kinds; and this recognition is really even more important in Voltaire's case than in Carlyle's own. He was "a bundle of nerves," and the clear light of his sympathetic intelligence was often blown aside by gusts of passion—often enough excusably. But while his temperamental weaknesses exposed him at times to humiliation, and often to sarcasm; and while his compelled resort to constant stratagem made him more prone to trickery than his admirers can well care to think him, the balance of his character is abundantly on the side of generosity and humanity.

One of the most unjustifiable of recent attacks upon him (one regrets to have to say it) came from the pen of the late Prof. Churton Collins. In his book on *Voltaire, Montesquieu, and Rousseau in England* (1908) that critic gives in the main an unbiassed account of Voltaire's English experience; but at one point (p. 39) he plunges into a violent impeachment with the slightest possible justification. He in effect adopts the old allegation of Ruffhead, the biographer of Pope—a statement repeated by Johnson—that Voltaire used his acquaintance with Pope and Bolingbroke to play the spy on them, conveying information to Walpole, for which he was rewarded. The whole story collapses upon critical examination. Ruffhead's story is, in brief, that Pope purposely lied to Voltaire as to the authorship of certain published letters attacking Walpole. They were by Bolingbroke; but Pope, questioned by Voltaire, said they were his own, begging him to keep the fact absolutely secret. Next day at court everyone was speaking of the letters as Pope's; and Pope accordingly knew that Voltaire was a traitor. For this tale there is absolutely nothing but hearsay evidence. Ruffhead, as Johnson declared, knew nothing of Pope, and simply used Warburton's material. The one quasi-confirmation cited by Mr. Collins is Bolingbroke's letter to Swift (May 18, 1727) asking him to "insinuate" that Walpole's only ground for ascribing the letters to Bolingbroke "is the authority of one of his spies.....who reports, *not what he hears .....but what he guesses.*" This is an absolute contradiction of the Pope story, at two points. It refers to a *guess* at Bolingbroke, and tells of no citation from Pope. To put it as confirming the charge is to exhibit a complete failure of judgment.

After this irrational argument, Mr. Collins offers a worse. He admits (p. 43) that Voltaire always remained on friendly terms with both Pope and Bolingbroke; but adds that this "can scarcely be alleged as a proof of his innocence, for neither Pope nor Bolingbroke would, for such an offence, have been likely to quarrel with a man in a position so peculiar as that of Voltaire. *His flattery was pleasant.....*" Such an argument is worse than nugatory. That Bolingbroke spoke ill in private of Voltaire on general grounds counts for nothing. He did the same of Pope and of nearly all his friends. Mr. Collins further accuses Voltaire of baseness, falsehood, and hypocrisy on the mere score of his habit of extravagant flattery. This was notoriously the French mode in that age; but it had been just as much the mode in seventeenth-century England, from the Jacobean translators of the Bible to Dryden—to name no others. And Mr. Collins in effect charges systematic hypocrisy upon both Pope and Bolingbroke.

Other stories of Ruffhead's against Voltaire are equally improbable and ill-vouched—as Mr. Collins incidentally admits, though he forgets the admission. They all come from Warburton, himself convicted of double-dealing with Pope; and they finally stand for the hatred of Frenchmen which was so common in eighteenth-century England, and is apparently not yet quite extinct. Those who would have a sane, searching, and competent estimate of Voltaire, leaning humanely to the side of goodwill, should turn to the *Voltaire* of M. Champion. A brief estimate was attempted by the present writer in the *R. P. A. Annual* for 1912.

11. It is difficult to realize how far the mere demand for tolerance which sounds from Voltaire's plays and poems before he has begun to assail credences was a signal and an inspiration to new thinkers. Certain it is that the principle of toleration, passed on by Holland to England, was regarded by the orthodox priesthood in France as the abomination of desolation, and resisted by them with all their power. But the contagion was unquenchable. It was presumably in Holland that there were printed in 1738 the two volumes of *Lettres sur la religion essentielle à l'homme, distinguée de ce qui n'en est que l'accessoire,* by Marie Huber, a Genevese lady living in Lyons; also the two following parts (1739), replying to criticisms on the earlier. In its gentle way, the book stands very distinctly for the "natural" and ethical principle in religion, denying that the deity demands from men either service or worship, or that he can be wronged by their deeds, or that he can punish them eternally for their sins. This was one of the first French fruits,

after Voltaire, of the English deistic influence;[1] and it is difficult to understand how the authoress escaped molestation. Perhaps the memory of the persecution inflicted on the mystic Madame Guyon withheld the hand of power. As it was, four Protestant theologians opened fire on her, regarding her doctrine as hostile to Christianity. One pastor wrote from Geneva, one from Amsterdam, and two professors from Zurich—the two last in Latin.[2]

From about 1746 onwards, the rationalist movement in eighteenth-century France rapidly widens and deepens. The number of rationalistic writers, despite the press laws which in that age inflicted the indignity of imprisonment on half the men of letters, increased from decade to decade, and the rising prestige of the *philosophes* in connection with the *Encyclopédie* (1751–72) gave new courage to writers and printers. At once the ecclesiastical powers saw in the *Encyclopédie* a dangerous enemy; and in January, 1752, the Sorbonne condemned a thesis "To the celestial Jerusalem," by the Abbé de Prades. It had at first (1751) been received with official applause, but was found on study to breathe the spirit of the new work,[3] to which the Abbé had contributed, and whose editor, Diderot, was his friend. Sooth to say, it contained not a little matter calculated to act as a solvent of faith. Under the form of a vindication of orthodox Catholicism, it negated alike Descartes and Leibnitz; and declared that the science of Newton and the Dutch physiologists was a better defence of religion than the theses of Clarke, Descartes, Cudworth, and Malebranche, which made for materialism. The handling, too, of the question of natural *versus* revealed religion, in which "theism" is declared to be superior to all religions *si unam excipias veram*, "if you except the one true," might well arouse distrust in a vigilant Catholic reader.[4] The whole argument savours far more of the scientific comparative method than was natural in the work of an eighteenth-century seminarist; and the principle, "Either we are ocular witnesses of the facts or we know them only by hearsay,"[5] was plainly as dangerous to the Christian creed as to any other. According to Naigeon,[6] the treatise was wholly the work of de Prades

[1] Cp. Stäudlin, *Gesch. des Rationalismus und Supernaturalismus*, 1826, pp. 287–90 Hagenbach, *Kirchengeschichte des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts*, 2te Aufl. 1848, i, 218–20.

[2] Zimmerman, *De causis magis magisque invalescentis incredulitatis, et medela huic malo adhibenda*, Tiguri, 1739, 4to. Prof. Breitinger of Zurich wrote a criticism afterwards tr. (1741) as *Examen des Lettres sur la religion essentielle*. De Roches, pastor at Geneva, published in letter-form 2 vols. entitled *Défense du Christianisme*, as "préservatif contre" the *Lettres* of Mdlle. Huber (1740); and Bouillier of Amsterdam also 2 vols. of *Lettres* (1741).

[3] Cp. Bouillier, *Hist. de la philos. cartés.* ii, 624–25; D'Argenson, *Mémoires*, ed. Jannet, iv, 63.

[4] See the thesis (*Jerusalem Cœlesti*) as printed in the *Apologie de M. l'Abbé De Prades*, "Amsterdam," 1752, pp. 4, 6.

[5] *Id.* p. 10.

[6] *Mémoires sur la vie et les ouvrages de Diderot*, 1821, p. 160.

and another Abbé, Yvon;[1] but it remains probable that Diderot inspired not a little of the reasoning; and the clericals, bent on putting down the *Encyclopédie*, professed to have discovered that he was the real author of the thesis. Either this belief or a desire to strike at the *Encyclopédie* through one of its collaborators[2] was the motive of the absurdly belated censure. Such a fiasco evoked much derision from the philosophic party, particularly from Voltaire; and the Sorbonne compassed a new revenge. Soon after came the formal condemnation of the first two volumes of the *Encyclopédie*, of which the second had just appeared.[3]

D'Argenson, watching in his vigilant retirement the course of things on all hands, sees in the episode a new and dangerous development, "the establishment of a veritable inquisition in France, of which the Jesuits joyfully take charge," though he repeatedly remarks also on the eagerness of the Jansenists to outgo the Jesuits.[4] But soon the publication of the *Encyclopédie* is resumed; and in 1753 D'Argenson contentedly notes the official bestowal of "tacit permissions to print secretly" books which could not obtain formal authorization. The permission had been given first by the President Malesherbes; but even when that official lost the king's confidence the practice was continued by the lieutenant of police.[5] Despite the staggering blow of the suppression of the *Encyclopédie*, the *philosophes* speedily triumphed. So great was the discontent even at court that soon (1752) Madame de Pompadour and some of the ministry invited D'Alembert and Diderot to resume their work, "observing a necessary reserve in all things touching religion and authority." Madame de Pompadour was in fact, as D'Alembert said at her death, "in her heart one of ours," as was D'Argenson. But D'Alembert, in a long private conference with D'Argenson, insisted that they must write in freedom like the English and the Prussians, or not at all. Already there was talk of suppressing the philosophic works of Condillac, which a few years before had gone uncondemned; and freedom must be preserved at any cost. "I acquiesce," writes the ex-Minister, "in these arguments."[6]

Curiously enough, the freethinking Fontenelle, who for a time (the dates are elusive) held the office of royal censor, was more rigorous

[1] Cp. Bachaumont, *Mémoires secrets*, 4 fév. 1762; 22 avril, 1768. In the latter entry, Yvon is described as "poursuivi comme infidèle, quoique le plus croyant de France." In 1768, after the *Bélisaire* scandal, he was refused permission to proceed with the publication of his *Histoire ecclésiastique*.

[2] This was de Prades's own view of the matter (*Apologie*, as cited, p. v); and D'Argenson repeatedly says as much. *Mémoires*, iv, 57, 65, 66, 74, 77.

[3] Rocquain, *L'esprit revolutionnaire avant la révolution*, 1878, pp. 149–51; Morley, *Diderot*, ch. v; D'Argenson, iv, 78. The decree of suppression was dated 13 fév. 1752.

[4] *Mémoires*, iv, 64, 74. [5] *Id.* iv, 129, 140. [6] *Id.* iv, 92–93.

than other officials who had not his reputation for heterodoxy. One day he refused to pass a certain manuscript, and the author put the challenge: "You, sir, who have published the *Histoire des Oracles*, refuse me this?" "If I had been the censor of the *Oracles*," replied Fontenelle, "I should not have passed it."[1] And he had cause for his caution. The unlucky Tercier, who, engrossed in "foreign affairs," had authorized the publication of the *De l'Esprit* of Helvétius, was compelled to resign the censorship, and severely rebuked by the Paris Parlement.[2] But the culture-history of the period, like the political, was one of ups and downs. From time to time the philosophic party had friends at court, as in the persons of the Marquis D'Argenson, Malesherbes, and the Duc de Choiseul, of whom the last-named engineered the suppression of the Jesuits.[3] Then there were checks to the forward movement in the press, as when, in 1770, Choiseul was forced to retire on the advent of Madame Du Barry. The output of freethinking books is after that year visibly curtailed. But nothing could arrest the forward movement of opinion.

12. A new era of propaganda and struggle had visibly begun. In the earlier part of the century freethought had been disseminated largely by way of manuscripts[4] and reprints of foreign books in translation; but from the middle onwards, despite denunciations and prohibitions, new books multiply. To the policy of tacit toleration imposed by Malesherbes a violent end was temporarily put in 1757, when the Jesuits obtained a proclamation of the death penalty against all writers who should attack the Christian religion, directly or indirectly. It was doubtless under the menace of this decree that Deslandes, before dying in 1757, caused to be drawn up by two notaries an *acte* by which he disavowed and denounced not only his *Grands hommes morts en plaisantant* but all his other works, whether printed or in MS., in which he had "laid down principles or sustained sentiments contrary to the spirit of religion."[5] But in 1764, on the suppression of the Jesuits, there was a vigorous resumption of propaganda. "There are books," writes Voltaire in 1765, "of which forty years ago one would not have trusted the manuscript to one's friends, and of which there are now published six editions in eighteen months."[6]

[1] Maury, *Hist. de l'ancienne Académie des Inscriptions*, 1864, pp. 312–13.
[2] *Journal historique de Barbier*, 1847–56, iv, 304.
[3] Astruc, we learn from D'Alembert, connected their decline with the influence of the new opinions. "Ce ne sont pas les jansenistes qui tuent les jésuites, c'est l'Encyclopédie." "Le marouflé Astruc," adds D'Alembert, "est comme Pasquin, il parle quelquefois d'assez bon sens." Lettre à Voltaire, 4 mai, 1762.
[4] Cp. pref. (*La Vie de Salvien*) to French tr. of Salvian, 1734, p. lxix. I have seen MS. translations of Toland and Woolston.
[5] MS. statement, in eighteenth-century hand, on flyleaf of a copy of 1755 ed. of the *Grands hommes*, in the writer's possession. [6] Lettre à D'Alembert, 16 Octobre, 1765.

Voltaire single-handed produced a library; and d'Holbach is credited with at least a dozen freethinking treatises, every one remarkable in its day. But there were many more combatants. The reputation of Voltaire has overshadowed even that of his leading contemporaries, and theirs and his have further obscured that of the lesser men; but a list of miscellaneous freethinking works by French writers during the century, up to the Revolution, will serve to show how general was the activity after 1750. It will be seen that very little was published in France in the period in which English deism was most fecund. A noticeable activity of publication begins about 1745. But it was when the long period of chronic warfare ended for France with the peace of Paris (1763); when she had lost India and North America; when she had suppressed the Jesuit order (1764); and when England had in the main turned from intellectual interests to the pursuit of empire and the development of manufacturing industry, that the released French intelligence[1] turned with irresistible energy to the rational criticism of established opinions. The following table is thus symbolic of the whole century's development:—

1700. *Lettre d'Hypocrate à Damagète*, attributed to the Comte de Boulainvilliers. (Cologne.) Rep. in *Bibliothèque Volante*, Amsterdam, 1700.

,, [Claude Gilbert.] *Histoire de Calejava, ou de l'isle des hommes raisonnables, avec le parallèle de leur morale et du Christianisme.* Dijon. Suppressed by the author: only one copy known to have escaped.

1704. [Gueudeville.] *Dialogues de M. le Baron de la Houtan et d'un sauvage dans l'Amérique.* (Amsterdam.)

1709. *Lettre sur l'enthousiasme* (Fr. tr. of Shaftesbury, by Samson). La Haye.

1710. [Tyssot de Patot, Symon.] *Voyages et Avantures de Jaques Massé.* (Bourdeaux.)

,, *Essai sur l'usage de la raillerie* (Fr. tr. of Shaftesbury, by Van Effen). La Haye.

1712. [Deslandes, A. F. B.] *Reflexions sur les grands hommes qui sont morts en plaisantant.*[2] (Amsterdam.)

1714. *Discours sur la liberté de penser* [French tr. of Collins's *Discourse of Freethinking*], traduit de l'anglois et augmenté d'une Lettre d'un Médecin Arabe. (Tr. by Henri Scheurléer and Jean Rousset.) [Rep. 1717.][3]

[1] Of the works noted below, the majority appear or profess to have been printed at Amsterdam, though many bore the imprint *Londres*. All the freethinking books and translations ascribed to d'Holbach bore it. The *Arétin* of Abbé Dulaurens bore the imprint: "Rome, aux dépens de la Congrégation de l'Index." Mystifications concerning authorship have been as far as possible cleared up in the present edition.

[2] Given by Brunet, who is followed by Wheeler, as appearing in 1732, and as translated into English, under the title *Dying Merrily*, in 1745. But I possess an English translation of *1713* (pref. dated March 25), entitled *A Philological Essay: or, Reflections on the Death of Freethinkers*.....By Monsieur D——, of the Royal Academy of Sciences in France, and author of the *Poetae Rusticantis Literatum Otium*. Translated from the French by Mr. B——, with additions by the author, now in London, and the translator. [A note in a contemporary hand makes "B" Boyer.] Barbier gives 1712 for the first edition, 1732 for the second. Rep. 1755 and 1776.

[3] There is no sign of any such excitement in France over the translation as was aroused in England by the original; but an *Examen du traité de la liberté de penser*, by De Crousaz, was published at Amsterdam in 1718.

1719. [Vroes.] *La Vie et l'Esprit de M. Benoît de Spinoza.*

1720. Same work rep. under the double title: *De tribus impostoribus: Des trois imposteurs.* Frankfort on Main.

1724. [Lévesque de Burigny.] *Histoire de la philosophie payenne.* La Haye, 2 tom.

1730. [Bernard, J.-F.] *Dialogues critiques et philosophiques.* "Par l'Abbé de Charte-Livry." (Amsterdam.) Rep. 1735.

1731. *Réfutation des erreurs de Benoît de Spinoza,* par Fénelon, le P. Laury, benédictin, et Boulainvilliers, avec la vie de Spinoza.....par Colerus, etc. (collected and published by Lenglet du Fresnoy). Bruxelles (really Amsterdam). The treatise of Boulainvilliers is really a popular exposition.

1732. Re-issue of Deslandes's *Réflexions.*

1734. [Voltaire.] *Lettres philosophiques.* 4 edd. within the year. [Condemned to be burned. Publisher imprisoned.]

„ [Longue, Louis-Pierre de.] *Les Princesses Malabares, ou le Célibat Philosophique.* [Deistic allegory. Condemned to be burned.]

1737. Marquis D'Argens. *La Philosophie du Bon Sens.* (Berlin: 8th edition, Dresden, 1754.)

1738. ——, *Lettres Juives.* 6 tom. (Berlin.)

„ [Marie Huber.] *Lettres sur la religion essentielle à l'homme, distingue de ce qui n'en est que l'accessoire.* 2 tom. (Nominally London.) Rep. 1739 and 1756.

1739. ——, *Suite* to the foregoing, "servant de réponse aux objections," etc. Also *Suite de la troisième partie.*

1741. [Deslandes.] *Pigmalion, ou la Statue animée.* [Condemned to be burnt by Parlement of Dijon, 1742.]

„ ——, *De la Certitude des connaissances humaines.....*traduit de l'anglais par F. A. D. L. V.

1743. *Nouvelles libertés de penser.* Amsterdam. [Edited by Dumarsais. Contains the first print of Fontenelle's *Traité de la Liberté,* Dumarsais's short essays *Le Philosophe* and *De la raison,* Mirabaud's *Sentimens des philosophes sur la nature de l'âme,* etc.]

1745. [Lieut. De la Serre.] *La vraie religion traduite de l'Ecriture Sainte, par permission de Jean, Luc, Marc, et Matthieu.* (Nominally Trévoux, "aux dépens des Pères de la Société de Jésus.") [Appeared later as *Examen,* etc. Condemned to be burnt by Parlement of Paris.]

[This book was republished in the same year with "demontrée par" substituted in the title for "traduite de," and purporting to be "traduit de l'Anglais de Gilbert Burnet," with the imprint "Londres, G. Cock, 1745." It appeared again in 1761 as *Examen de la religion dont on cherche l'éclaircissement de bonne foi. Attribué à M. de Saint-Evremont, traduit,* etc., with the same imprint. It again bore the latter title when reprinted in 1763, and again in the *Évangile de la Raison* in 1764. Voltaire in 1763 declared it to be the work of Dumarsais, pronouncing it to be assuredly not in the style of Saint-Evremond (Grimm, iv, 85–88; Voltaire, Lettre à Damilaville, 6 déc. 1763), adding "mais il est fort tronqué et détestablement imprimé." This is true of the reprints in the *Évangile de la Raison* (1764, etc.), of one of which the present writer possesses a copy to which there has been appended in MS. a long section which had been lacking. The *Évangile* as a whole purports to be "Ouvrage posthume de M. D. M.....y."[1]

[1] This was probably meant to point to the Abbé de Marsy, who died in 1763.

But its first volume includes four pieces of Voltaire's, and his abridged *Testament de Jean Meslier*. Further, De la Serre is recorded to have claimed the authorship in writing on the eve of his death. Barbier, *Dict. des Anonymes*, 2e éd, No. 6158. He is said to have been hanged as a spy at Maestricht, April 11, 1748.]

1745. [La Mettrie.] *Histoire naturelle de l'âme.* [Condemned to be burnt, 1746.] Rep. as *Traité de l'Âme.*

1746. [Diderot.] *Pensées philosophiques.* [Condemned to be burnt.]

1748. [P. Estève.] *L'Origine de l'Univers expliquée par un principe de matière.* (Berlin.)

,, [Benoît de Maillet.] *Telliamed, ou Entretiens d'un philosophe indien avec un missionaire français.* (Printed privately, 1735 ; rep. 1755.)

,, [La Mettrie.] *L'Homme Machine.*

1750. *Nouvelles libertés de penser.* Rep.

1751. [Mirabaud, J. B. de.] *Le Monde, son origine et son antiquité.* [Edited by the Abbé Le Mascrier (who contributed the preface and the third part) and Dumarsais.]

,, De Prades. *Sorbonne Thesis.*

1752. [Gouvest, J. H. Maubert de.] *Lettres Iroquoises.* "Irocopolis, chez les Vénérables." 2 tom. (Rep. 1769 as *Lettres cherakésiennes.*)

,, [Génard, F.] *L'École de l'homme, ou Parallèle des Portraits du siècle et des tableaux de l'écriture sainte.*[1] Amsterdam, 3 tom. [Author imprisoned.]

1753. [Baume-Desdossat, Canon of Avignon.] *La Christiade.* [Book suppressed. Author fined.][2]

,, Maupertuis. *Système de la nature.*

,, Astruc, Jean. *Conjectures sur les mémoires originaux dont il parait que Moïse s'est servi pour composer le livre de la Genèse.* Bruxelles.

1754. Prémontval, A. I. le Guay de. *Le Diogène de d'Alembert, ou Pensées libres sur l'homme.* Berlin. (2nd ed. enlarged, 1755.)

,, Burigny, J. L. *Théologie payenne.* 2 tom. (New ed. of his *Histoire de la philosophie*, 1724.)

,, [Diderot.] *Pensées sur l'interpretation de la nature.*

,, Beausobre, L. de (the younger). *Pyrrhonisme du Sage.* Berlin. (Burned by Paris Parlement.)

1755. *Recherches philosophiques sur la liberté de l'homme.* Trans. of Collins's Philosophical Inquiry concerning Human Liberty.

,, [Voltaire.] Poème *Sur la loi naturelle.*

,, *Analyse raisonnée de Bayle.* 4 tom. [By the Abbé de Marsy. Suppressed.[3] Continued in 1773, in 4 new vols., by Robinet.]

,, Morelly. *Code de la Nature.*

,, [Deleyre.] *Analyse de la philosophie de Bacon.* (Largely an exposition of Deleyre's own views.)

1757. Prémontval. *Vues Philosophiques.* (Amsterdam.)

[In this year—apparently after one of vigilant repression—was pronounced the death penalty against all writers attacking religion. Hence a general suspen-

[1] The Abbé Sepher ascribed this book to one Dupuis, a Royal Guardsman.

[2] This "prose poem" was not an intentional burlesque, as the ecclesiastical authorities alleged; but it did not stand for orthodoxy. See Grimm's *Correspondance*, i, 113.

[3] "A eu les honneurs de la brûlure, et toutes les censures cumulées des Facultés de Théologie, de la Sorbonne et des évêques." Bachaumont, déc. 23, 1763. Marsy, who was expelled from the Order of Jesuits, was of bad character, and was hotly denounced by Voltaire.

sion of publication. In 1764 the Jesuits were suppressed, and the policy of censorship was soon paralysed.]

1758. Helvétius. *De l'Esprit.* (Authorized. Then condemned.)

1759. [Voltaire.] *Candide.* ("Genève.")

,, Translation of Hume's *Natural History of Religion* and Philosophical Essays. (By Mérian.) Amsterdam.

1761. [N.-A. Boulanger.[1]] *Recherches sur l'origine du despotisme oriental, et des superstitions.* "Ouvrage posthume de Mr. D. J. D. P. E. C."

,, Rep. of De la Serre's *La vraie religion* as *Examen de la religion*, etc.

,, [D'Holbach.] *Le Christianisme dévoilé.* [Imprint: "Londres, 1756." Really printed at Nancy in 1761. Wrongly attributed to Boulanger and to Damilaville.] Rep. 1767 and 1777.

[Grimm (*Corr. inédite*, 1829, p. 194) speaks in 1763 of this book in his notice of Boulanger, remarking that the title was apparently meant to suggest the author of *L'Antiquité dévoilée*, but that it was obviously by another hand. The *Antiquité*, in fact, was the concluding section of Boulanger's posthumous *Despotisme Oriental* (1761), and was not published till 1766. Grimm professed ignorance as to the authorship, but must have known it, as did Voltaire, who by way of mystification ascribed the book to Damilaville. See Barbier.]

1762. Rousseau. *Émile.* [Publicly burned at Paris and at Geneva. Condemned by the Sorbonne.]

,, Robinet, J. B. *De la nature.* Vol. i. (Vol. ii in 1764; iii and iv in 1766.)

1763. [Voltaire.] *Saül.* Genève.

,, —— *Dialogue entre un Caloyer et un honnête homme.*

,, Rep. of De la Serres' *Examen.*

1764. *Discours sur la liberté de penser.* (Rep. of trans. of Collins.)

,, [Voltaire.] *Dictionnaire philosophique portatif.*[2] [First form of the *Dictionnaire philosophique.* Burned in 1765.]

,, *Lettres secrètes de M. de Voltaire.* [Holland. Collection of tracts made by Robinet, against Voltaire's will.]

,, [Voltaire.] *Mélanges*, 3 tom. Genève.

,, [Dulaurens, Abbé H. J.] *L'Arétin.*

,, *L'Evangile de la Raison.* Ouvrage posthume de M. D. M——y. [Ed. by Abbé Dulaurens; containing the *Testament de Jean Meslier* (greatly abridged and adapted by Voltaire); Voltaire's *Catéchisme de l'honnête homme, Sermon des cinquante*, etc.; the *Examen de la religion, attribué à M. de St. Evremond;* Rousseau's *Vicaire Savoyard*, from *Émile;* Dumarsais's *Analyse de la religion chrétienne*, etc. Rep. 1765 and 1766.]

1765. *Recueil Nécessaire, avec L'Évangile de la Raison*, 2 tom.

[Rep. of parts of the *Évangile.* Rep. 1767,[3] 1768, with Voltaire's *Examen important de Milord Bolingbroke* substituted for that of De la Serre (*attribué a M. de St. Evremond*), and with a revised set of extracts from Meslier.]

,, Castillon, J. L. *Essai de philosophie morale.*

1766. Boulanger, N. A. *L'Antiquité dévoilée.*[4] 3 tom. [Recast by d'Holbach. Life of author by Diderot.]

[1] See Grimm, *Corr.* v, 15.

[2] A second edition appeared within the year. "Quoique proscrit presque partout, et même en Hollande, c'est de là qu'il nous arrive." Bachaumont, déc. 27, 1764.

[3] Bachaumont, mai 7, 1767.

[4] "Se repand à Paris avec la permission de la police." Bachaumont, 13 fév. 1766.

1766. *Voyage de Robertson aux terres australes.* Traduit sur le Manuscrit Anglois. Amsterdam.

[Barbier (*Dict. des Ouvr. Anon.*, 2e éd. iii, 437) has a note concerning this *Voyage* which pleasantly illustrates the strategy that went on in the issue of freethinking books. An ex-censor of the period, he tells us, wrote a note on the original edition pointing out that it contains (pp. 145–54) a tirade against "Parlements." This passage was "suppressed to obtain permission to bring the book into France," and a new passage attacking the Encyclopédistes under the name of *Pansophistes* was inserted at another point. The ex-censor had a copy of an edition of 1767, in 12mo, better printed than the first and on better paper. In this, at p. 87, line 30, begins the attack on the Encyclopédistes, which continues to p. 93.

If this is accurate, there has taken place a double mystification. I possess a copy dated 1767, in 12mo, in which no page has so many as 30 lines, and in which there has been no typographical change whatever in pp. 87–93, where there is no mention of Encyclopédistes. But pp. 145–54 are clearly a typographical substitution, in different type, with fewer lines to the page. Here there is a narrative about the *Pansophistes* of the imaginary "Australie"; but while it begins with enigmatic satire it ends by praising them for bringing about a great intellectual and social reform.

If the censure was induced to pass the book as it is in this edition by this insertion, it was either very heedless or very indulgent. There is a sweeping attack on the papacy (pp. 91–99), and another on the Jesuits (pp. 100–102); and it leans a good deal towards republicanism. But on a balance, though clearly anti-clerical, it is rather socio-political than freethinking in its criticism. The words on the title-page, *traduit sur le manuscrit anglois*, are of course pure mystification. It is a romance of the *Utopia* school, and criticizes English conditions as well as French.]

1766. De Prades. *Abrégé de l'histoire ecclésiastique de Fleury.* (Berlin.) Pref. by Frederick the Great. (Rep. 1767.)

,, [Burigny.] *Examen critique des Apologistes de la religion chrétienne.* Published (by Naigeon?) under the name of Freret.[1] [Twice rep. in 1767. Condemned to be burnt, 1770.]

,, [Voltaire.] *Le philosophe ignorant.*

,, [Abbé Millot.] *Histoire philosophique de l'homme.* [Naturalistic theory of human beginnings.]

1767. Castillon. *Almanach Philosophique.*

,, *Doutes sur la religion* (attributed to Gueroult de Pival), *suivi de l'Analyse du Traité théologique-politique de Spinoza* (by Boulainvilliers). [Rep. with additions in 1792 under the title *Doutes sur les religious révélées, adressés à Voltaire*, par Émilie du Chatelet. Ouvrage posthume.]

,, [Dulaurens.] *L'antipapisme révélé.*

,, *Lettre de Thrasybule à Leucippe.* [Published under the name of Freret (d. 1749). Written or edited by Naigeon.[2]]

[1] "Il est facile de se convaincre que les parties les plus importantes et les plus solides de cet ouvrage sont empruntées aux travaux de Burigny." L.-F. Alfred Maury, *L'ancienne Académie des Inscriptions et belles-lettres*, 1864, p. 316. Maury leaves it an open question whether the compilation was made by Burigny or by Naigeon. The Abbé Bergier accepted it without hesitation as the work of Freret, who was known to hold some heretical views. (Maury, p. 317.) Barbier confidently ascribes the work to Burigny.

[2] The mystification in regard to this work is elaborate. It purports to be translated from an English version, declared in turn by its translator to be made "from the Greek."

1767. [D'Holbach.] *L'Imposture sacerdotale, ou Recueil de vièces sur la clergé, traduites de l'anglois.*

,, [Voltaire.] *Collection des lettres sur les miracles.*

,, —— *Examen important de milord Bolingbroke.*

,, Marmontel. *Bélisaire.* (Censured by the Sorbonne.)

,, [Damilaville.] *L'honnêteté théologique.*

,, Reprint of *Le Christianisme dévoilé.* [Condemned to be burnt, 1768 and 1770.]

,, [Voltaire.] *Questions sur les Miracles.* Par un Proposant.

,, *Seconde partie* of the *Recherches sur l'origine du despotisme.*

1768. Meister, J. H. *De l'origine des principes religieux.*

[Author banished from his native town, Zurich, "in perpetuity" (decree rescinded in 1772), and book publicly burned there by the hangman.[1] Meister published a modified edition at Zurich in 1769. Orig. rep. in the *Recueil Philosophique*, 1770.]

1768. *Catalogue raisonné des esprits forts, depuis le curé Rabelais jusqu'au curé Meslier.*

,, [D'Holbach.] *La Contagion sacrée, ou histoire naturelle de la superstition.* [Condemned to be burnt, 1770.]

,, —— *Lettres philosophiques sur l'origine des préjugés*, etc., *traduites de l'anglois* (of Toland).

,, —— *Lettres à Eugénie, ou preservatif contre les préjugés.* 2 tom.

,, —— *Théologie Portative.* "Par l'abbé Bernier." [Also burnt, 1776.]

,, *Traité des trois Imposteurs.* (See 1719 and 1720.) Rep. 1775, 1777, 1793.

,, Naigeon, J. A. *Le militaire philosophe.* [Adaptation of a MS. The last chapter by d'Holbach.]

,, D'Argens. *Œuvres complètes*, 24 tom. Berlin.

,, *Examen des prophéties qui servent de fondement à la religion chrétienne* (tr. from Collins by d'Holbach).

,, Robinet. *Considérations philosophiques.*

1769-1780. *L'Évangile du jour.* 18 tom. Series of pieces, chiefly by Voltaire.

1769. [Diderot. Also ascribed to Castillon.] *Histoire générale des dogmes et opinions philosophiques.....tirée du Dictionnaire encyclopédique.* Londres, 3 tom.

,, [Mirabaud.] *Opinions des anciens sur les juifs*, and *Réflexions impartiales sur l'Évangile*[2] (rep. in 1777 as *Examen critique du Nouveau Testament*).

,, [Isoard-Delisle, otherwise Delisle de Sales.] *De la Philosophie de la Nature.* 6 tom. [Author imprisoned. Book condemned to be burnt, 1775.]

,, [Seguier de Saint-Brisson.] *Traité des Droits de Génie, dans lequel on examine si la connoissance de la verité est avantageuse aux hommes et possible au philosophe.* "Carolsrouhe," 1769. [A strictly naturalistic-ethical theory of society. Contains an attack on the doctrine of Rousseau, in *Émile*, on the usefulness of religious error.]

It is now commonly ascribed to Naigeon. (Maury, as cited, p. 317.) Its machinery, and its definite atheism, mark it as of the school of d'Holbach, though it is alleged to have been written by Freret as early as 1722. It is however reprinted, with the *Examen critique des Apologistes*, in the 1796 edition of Freret's works without comment; and Barbier was satisfied that it was the one genuine "philosophic" work ascribed to Freret, but that it was redacted by Naigeon from imperfect MSS.

[1] *Notice sur Henri Meister*, pref. to *Lettres inédites de Madame de Staël à Henri Meister*, 1903, p. 17.

[2] "Deux nouveaux livres infernaux.....connus comme manuscrits depuis longtemps et gardés dans l'obscurité des portefeuilles....." Bachaumont, 22 mars, 1769.

1769. *L'enfer détruit*, traduit de l'Anglois [by d'Holbach.]
1770. [D'Holbach.] *Histoire critique de Jésus Christ.*
,, —— *Examen critique de la vie et des ouvrages de Saint Paul* (tr. from English of Peter Annet).
,, —— *Essai sur les Préjugés.* (Not by Dumarsais, whose name on the title-page is a mystification.)
,, —— *Système de la Nature.* 2 tom.
,, *Recueil Philosophique.* 2 tom. [Edited by Naigeon. Contains a rep. of Dumarsais's essays *Le Philosophe* and *De la raison*, an extract from Tindal, essays by Vauvenargues and Freret (or Fontenelle), three by Mirabaud, Diderot's *Pensées sur la religion*, several essays by d'Holbach, Meister's *De l'origine des principes religieux*, etc.]
,, *Analyse de Bayle.* Rep. of the four vols. of De Marsy, with four more by Robinet.
,, *L'Esprit du Judaisme.* (Trans. from Collins by d'Holbach.)
,, Raynal (with Diderot and others). *Histoire philosophique des deux Indes.* (Containing atheistic arguments by Diderot. Suppressed, 1772.)

[In this year there were condemned to be burned seven freethinking works: d'Holbach's *Contagion Sacrée*; Voltaire's *Dieu et les Hommes;* the French translation (undated) of Woolston's *Discourses on the Miracles of Jesus Christ;* Freret's (really Burigny's) *Examen critique de la religion chrétienne;* an *Examen impartial des principales religions du monde*, undated; d'Holbach's *Christianisme dévoilé;* and his *Système de la Nature.*]

1772. *Le Bon Sens.* [Adaptation from Meslier by Diderot and d'Holbach. Condemned to be burnt, 1774.]
,, *De la nature humaine.* [Trans. of Hobbes by d'Holbach.]
1773. Helvétius. *De l'Homme.* Ouvrage posthume. 2 tom. [Condemned to be burnt, Jan. 10, 1774. Rep. 1775.]
,, Carra, J. L. *Système de la Raison, ou le prophète philosophe.*
,, [Burigny (?).] *Recherches sur les miracles.*
,, [D'Holbach.] *La politique naturelle.* 2 tom.
,, ——. *Système Sociale.* 3 tom.
1774. Abauzit, F. *Réflexions impartiales sur les Évangiles, suivies d'un essai sur l'Apocalypse.* (Abauzit died 1767.)
,, [Condorcet.] *Lettres d'un Théologien.* (Atheistic.)
,, New edition of *Theologie Portative.* 2 tom. [Condemned to be burnt.]
1775. [Voltaire.] *Histoire de Jenni, ou Le Sage et l'Athée.* [Attack on atheism.]
1776. [D'Holbach.] *La morale universelle.* 3 tom.
,, ——. *Ethocratie.*
1777. *Examen critique du Nouveau Testament*, "par M. Freret." [Not by Freret. A rep. of Mirabaud's *Réflexions impartiales sur l'Évangile*, 1769, which was probably written about 1750, being replied to in the *Réfutation du Celse moderne* of the Abbé Gautier, 1752 and 1765.]
,, Carra. *Esprit de la morale et de la philosophie.*
1778. Barthez, P. J. *Nouveaux éléments de la science de l'homme.*
1779. *Vie d'Apollonius de Tyane par Philostrate*, avec les commentaires donnés en anglois par Charles Blount sur les deux premiers livres. [Trans. by J.-F. Salvemini de Castillon, Berlin.] Amsterdam, 4 tom. (In addition to Blount's pref. and notes there is a scoffing dedication to Pope Clement XIV.)

1780. Duvernet, Abbé Th. J. *L'Intolérance religieuse.*
,, Clootz, Anacharsis. *La Certitude des preuves du Mahométisme.* [Reply by way of parody to Bergier's work, noted on p. 250.]
,, Second ed. of Raynal's *Histoire philosophique*, with additions. (Condemned to be burnt, 1781.)
1781. Maréchal, Sylvain. *Le nouveau Lucrèce.*
1783. Brissot de Warville. *Lettres philosophiques sur S. Paul.*
1784. Doray de Longrais. *Faustin, ou le siècle philosophique.*
,, Pougens, M. C. J. de. *Récréations de philosophie et de morale.*
1785. Maréchal. *Livre échappé au Déluge.* [Author dismissed.]
1787. Marquis Pastoret. *Zoroastre, Confucius, et Mahomet.*
1788. Meister. *De la morale naturelle.*
,, Pastoret. *Moïse considéré comme legislateur et comme moraliste.*
,, Maréchal. *Almanach des honnêtes gens.* [Author imprisoned; book burnt.]
1789. Volney. *Les Ruines des Empires.*
,, Duvernet, Abbé. *Les Dévotions de Madame de Betzamooth.*
,, Cerutti (Jesuit Father). *Bréviaire Philosophique, ou Histoire du Judaisme, du Christianisme, et du Déisme.*
1791–3. Naigeon. *Dictionnaire de la philosophie ancienne et moderne.*
1795. Dupuis. *De l'origine de tous les Cultes.* 5 tom.
,, *La Fable de Christ dévoilée; ou Lettre du muphti de Constantinople à Jean Ange Braschy, muphti de Rome.*
1797. Rep. of d'Holbach's *Contagion sacrée*, with notes by Lemaire.
1798. Maréchal. *Pensées libres sur les prêtres.* A Rome, et se trouve à Paris, chez les Marchands de Nouveautés. L'An Ier de la Raison, et VI de la République Française.

13. It will be noted that after 1770—coincidently, indeed, with a renewed restraint upon the press—there is a notable falling-off in the freethinking output. Rationalism had now permeated educated France; and, for different but analogous reasons, the stress of discussion gradually shifted as it had done in England. France in 1760 stood to the religious problem somewhat as England did in 1730, repeating the deistic evolution with a difference. By that time England was committed to the new paths of imperialism and commercialism; whereas France, thrown back on the life of ideas and on her own politico-economic problems, went on producing the abundant propaganda we have noted, and, alongside of it, an independent propaganda of economics and politics. At the end of 1767, the leading French diarist[1] notes that "there is formed at Paris a new sect, called the Economists," and names its leading personages, Quesnay, Mirabeau the elder, the Abbé Baudeau, Mercier de la Rivière, and Turgot. These developed the doctrine of agricultural or "real" production which so stimulated and influenced Adam Smith. But immediately afterwards[2] the diarist notes a rival sect, the school

[1] Bachaumont, *Mémoires Secrets*, déc. 20, 1767. [2] *Id.* Jan. 18, 1768.

of Forbonnais, who founded mainly on the importance of commerce and manufactures. Each "sect" had its journal. The intellectual ferment had inevitably fructified thought upon economic as upon historical, religious, and scientific problems; and there was in operation a fourfold movement, all tending to make possible the immense disintegration of the State which began in 1789. After the Economists came the "Patriots," who directed towards the actual political machine the spirit of investigation and reform. And the whole effective movement is not unplausibly to be dated from the fall of the Jesuits in 1764.[1] Inevitably the forces interacted: Montesquieu and Rousseau alike dealt with both the religious and the social issues; d'Holbach in his first polemic, the *Christianisme dévoilé*, opens the stern impeachment of kings and rulers which he develops so powerfully in the *Essai sur les Préjugés;* and the *Encyclopédie* sent its search-rays over all the fields of inquiry. But of the manifold work done by the French intellect in the second and third generations of the eighteenth century, the most copious and the most widely influential body of writings that can be put under one category is that of which we have above made a chronological conspectus.

Of these works the merit is of course very various; but the total effect of the propaganda was formidable, and some of the treatises are extremely effective. The *Examen critique* of Burigny,[2] for instance, which quickly won a wide circulation when printed, is one of the most telling attacks thus far made on the Christian system, raising as it does most of the issues fought over by modern criticism. It tells indeed of a whole generation of private investigation and debate; and the Abbé Bergier, assuming it to be the work of Freret, in whose name it is published, avows that its author "has written it in the same style as his academic dissertations: he has spread over it the same erudition; he seems to have read everything and mastered everything."[3] Perhaps not the least effective part of the book is the chapter which asks: "Are men more perfect since the coming of Jesus Christ?"; and it is here that the clerical reply is most feeble. The critic cites the claims made by apologists as to the betterment of life by Christianity, and then contrasts with those claims the thousand-and-one lamentations by Christian writers over the utter badness of all the life around them. Bergier in reply follows the tactic habitually employed in the same difficulty to-day: he ignores

[1] So Pidansat de Mairobert in his preface to the first ed. (1777) of the *Mémoires Secrets* of Bachaumont, continued by him. See pref. to the abridged ed. by Bibliophile Jacob.
[2] As to the authorship see above, p. 241.
[3] *La Certitude des preuves du Christianisme* (1767), 2e édit. 1768, *Avertissement*.

the fact that his own apologists have been claiming a vast betterment, and contends that religion is not to be blamed for the evils it condemns. Not by such furtive sophistry could the Church turn the attack, which, as Bergier bitterly observes, was being made by Voltaire in a new book every year.

As always, the weaker side of the critical propaganda is its effort at reconstruction. As in England, so in France, the faithful accused the critics of "pulling down without building up," when in point of fact their chief error was to build up—that is, to rewrite the history of human thought—before they had the required materials, or had even mastered those which existed. Thus Voltaire and Rousseau alike framed à priori syntheses of the origins of religion and society. But there were closer thinkers than they in the rationalistic ranks. Fontenelle's essay *De l'origine des fables*, though not wholly exempt from error, admittedly lays aright the foundations of mythology and hierology; and De Brosses in his treatise *Du Culte des dieux fétiches* (1760) does a similar service on the side of anthropology. Meister's essay *De l'origine des principes religieux* is full of insight and breadth; and, despite some errors due to the backwardness of anthropology, essentially scientific in temper and standpoint. His later essay, *De la morale naturelle*, shows the same independence and fineness of speculation, seeming indeed to tell of a character which missed fame by reason of over-delicacy of fibre and lack of the driving force which marked the foremost men of that tempestuous time. Vauvenargues's essay *De la suffisance de la religion naturelle* is no less clinching, granted its deism. So, on the side of philosophy, Mirabaud, who was secretary of the Académie from 1742 to 1755, handles the problem of the relation of deism to ethics—if the posthumous essays in the *Recueil philosophique* be indeed his—in a much more philosophic fashion than does Voltaire, arguing unanswerably for the ultimate self-dependence of morals. The *Lettre de Thrasybule à Leucippe*, ascribed to Freret, again, is a notably skilful attack on theism.

14. One of the most remarkable of the company in some respects is Nicolas-Antoine Boulanger (1722–1759), of whom Diderot gives a vivid account in a sketch prefixed to the posthumous *L'Antiquité dévoilée par ses usages* (1766). At the Collège de Beauvais, Boulanger was so little stimulated by his scholastic teachers that they looked for nothing from him in his maturity. When, however, at the age of seventeen, he began to study mathematics and architecture, his faculties began to develop; and the life, first of a military engineer in 1743–44, and later in the service

of the notable department of Roads and Bridges—the most efficient of all State services under Louis XV—made him an independent and energetic thinker. The chronic spectacle of the *corvée*, the forced labour of peasants on the roads, moved him to indignation; but he sought peace in manifold study, the engineer's contact with nature arousing in him all manner of speculations, geological and sociological. Seeking for historic light, he mastered Latin, which he had failed to do at school, reading widely and voraciously; and when the Latins failed to yield him the light he craved he systematically mastered Greek, reading the Greeks as hungrily and with as little satisfaction. Then he turned indefatigably to Hebrew, Syriac, and Arabic, gleaning at best verbal clues which at length he wrought into a large, loose, imaginative yet immensely erudite schema of ancient social evolution, in which the physicist's pioneer study of the structure and development of the globe controls the anthropologist's guesswork as to the beginnings of human society. The whole is set forth in the bulky posthumous work *Recherches sur l'origine du despotisme oriental* (1761), and in the further treatise *L'antiquité dévoilée* (3 tom. 1766), which is but the concluding section of the first-named.

It all yields nothing to modern science; the unwearying research is all carried on, as it were, in the dark; and the sleepless brain of the pioneer can but weave webs of impermanent speculation from masses of unsifted and unmanageable material. Powers which to-day, on a prepared ground of ascertained science, might yield the greatest results, were wasted in a gigantic effort to build a social science out of the chaos of undeciphered antiquity, natural and human. But the man is nonetheless morally memorable. Diderot pictures him with a head Socratically ugly, simple and innocent of life, gentle though vivacious, reading Rabbinical Hebrew in his walks on the high roads, suffering all his life from "domestic persecution," "little contradictory though infinitely learned," and capable of passing in a moment, on the stimulus of a new idea, into a state of profound and entranced absorption. Diderot is always enthusiastically generous in praise; but in reading and reviewing Boulanger's work we can hardly refuse assent to his friend's claim that "if ever man has shown in his career the true characters of genius, it was he." His immense research was all compassed in a life of thirty-seven years, occupied throughout in an active profession; and the diction in which he sets forth his imaginative construction of the past reveals a constant intensity of thought rarely combined with scholarly knowledge. But it was

an age of concentrated energy, carrying in its womb the Revolution. The perusal of Boulanger is a sufficient safeguard against the long-cherished hallucination that the French freethinking of his age was but a sparkle of raillery.

Even among some rationalists, however, who are content to take hearsay report on these matters, there appears still to subsist a notion that the main body of the French freethinkers of the eighteenth century were mere scoffers, proceeding upon no basis of knowledge and with no concern for research. Such an opinion is possible only to those who have not examined their work. To say nothing more of the effort of Boulanger, an erudition much more exact than Voltaire's and a deeper insight than his and Rousseau's into the causation of primitive religion inspires the writings of men like Burigny and Freret on the one hand, and Fontenelle and Meister on the other. The philosophic reach of Diderot, one of the most convinced opponents of the ruling religion, was recognized by Goethe. And no critic of the "*philosophes*" handled more uncompromisingly than did Dumarsais[1] the vanity of the assumption that a man became a philosopher by merely setting himself in opposition to orthodox belief. Dumarsais, long scholastically famous for his youthful treatise *Des Tropes*, lived up to his standard, whatever some of the more eminent *philosophes* may have done, being found eminently lovable by pietists who knew him; while for D'Alembert he was "the La Fontaine of the philosophers" in virtue of his lucid simplicity of style.[2] The *Analyse de la religion chrétienne* printed under his name in some editions of the *Évangile de la Raison* has been pronounced supposititious. It seems to be the work of at least two hands[3] of different degrees of instruction;

[1] In the short essay *Le Philosophe*, which appeared in the *Nouvelles Libertés de Penser*, 1743 and 1750, and in the *Recueil Philosophique*, 1770. In the 1793 rep. of the *Essai sur les préjugés* (again rep. in 1822) it is unhesitatingly affirmed, on the strength of its title-page and the prefixed letter of Dumarsais, dated 1750, that that book is an expansion of the essay *Le Philosophe*, and that this was published in 1760. But *Le Philosophe* is an entirely different production, which to a certain extent criticizes *les philosophes* so-called. The *Essai sur les préjugés* published in 1770 is not the work of Dumarsais; it is a new work by d'Holbach. This was apparently known to Frederick, who in his rather angry criticism of the book writes that, whereas Dumarsais had always respected constituted authorities, others had "put out in his name, two years after he was dead and buried, a libel of which the veritable author could only be a schoolboy as new to the world as he was puzzle-headed." (*Mélanges en vers et en prose de Frederic II*, 1792, ii, 215). Dumarsais died in 1754, but I can find no good evidence that the *Essai sur les préjugés* was ever printed before 1770. As to d'Holbach's authorship see the *Œuvres de Diderot*, ed. 1821, xii, 115 *sq.*—passage copied in the 1829–31 ed. of the *Correspondance littéraire* of Grimm and Diderot, xiv, 293 *sq.* In a letter to D'Alembert dated Mars 27, 1773, Voltaire writes that in a newly-printed collection of treatises containing his own *Lois de Minos* is included "*le philosophe* de Dumarsais, qui n'a jamais été imprimé jusqu'à present." This seems to be a complete mistake.

[2] Grimm (iv, 86) has some good stories of him. He announced one day that he had found twenty-five fatal flaws in the story of the resurrection of Lazarus, the first being that the dead do not rise. His scholarly friend Nicolas Boindin (see above, p. 222) said: "Dumarsais is a Jansenist atheist; as for me, I am a Molinist atheist."

[3] On two successive pages the title Messiah is declared to mean "simply one sent" and simply "anointed."

but, apart from some errors due to one of these, it does him no discredit, being a vigorous criticism of Scriptural contradictions and anomalies, such as a "Jansenist atheist" might well compose, though it makes the usual profession of deistic belief.

Later polemic works, inspired by those above noticed, reproduce some of their arguments, but with an advance in literary skill, as in the anonymous *Bon Sens* given forth (1772) by Diderot and d'Holbach as the work of Jean Meslier, but really an independent compilation, embodying other arguments with his, and putting the whole with a concision and brilliancy to which he could make no approach. Prémontval, a bad writer,[1] contrives nonetheless to say many pungent things of a deistic order in his *Diogène de d'Alembert*, and, following Marie Huber, puts forward the formula of religion *versus* theology, which has done so much duty in the nineteenth century. Of the whole literature it is not too much to say that it covered cogently most of the important grounds of latter-day debate, from the questions of revelation and the doctrine of torments to the bases of ethics and the problem of deity; and it would be hard to show that the nineteenth century has handled the main issues with more sincerity, lucidity, or logic than were attained by Frenchmen in the eighteenth. To-day, no doubt, in the light of a century and a-half of scientific, historic, and philosophic accumulation, the rationalist case is put with more profundity and accuracy by many writers than it could be in the eighteenth century. But we have to weigh the freethinkers of that age against their opponents, and the French performers against those of other countries, to make a fair estimate. When this is done their credit is safe. When German and other writers say with Tholuck that "unbelief entered Germany not by the weapons of mere wit and scoffing as in France; it grounded itself on learned research,"[2] they merely prove their ignorance of French culture-history. An abundance of learned research in France preceded the triumphant campaign of Voltaire, who did most of the witty writing on the subject; and whose light artillery was to the last reinforced by the heavier guns of d'Holbach. It is only in the analysis of the historical problem by the newer tests of anthropology and hierology, and in the light of latterly discovered documents, that our generation has made much advance on the strenuous pioneers of the age of Voltaire. And even in the

[1] Like Buffier and Huard, however, he strives for a reform in spelling, dropping many doubled letters, and writing *home, bone, acuse, fole, apelle, honête, afreux*, etc.

[2] *Abriss einer Geschichte der Umwälzung welche seit 1750 auf dem Gebiete der Theologie in Deutschland statt gefunden*, in Tholuck's *Vermischte Schriften*, 1839, ii, 5. The proposition is repeated pp. 24, 33.

field of anthropology the sound thinking of Fontenelle and De Brosses long preceded any equally valid work by rationalists in Germany; though Spencer of Cambridge had preceded them in his work of constructive orthodoxy.

15. Though the bibliographers claim to have traced the authorship in most cases, such works were in the first instance generally published anonymously,[1] as were those of Voltaire, d'Holbach, and the leading freethinkers; and the clerical policy of suppression had the result of leaving them generally unanswered, save in anonymous writings, when they nevertheless got into private circulation. It was generally impolitic that an official answer should appear to a book which was officially held not to exist; so that the orthodox defence was long confined mainly to the classic performances of Pascal, Bossuet, Huet, Fénelon, and some outsiders such as the Protestant Abbadie, who settled first in Berlin and later in London. The polemic of every one of the writers named is a work of ability; even that of Abbadie (*Traité de la Vérité de la religion chrétienne*, 1684), though now little known, was in its day much esteemed.[2] In the age of Louis XIV those classic answers to unbelief were by believers held to be conclusive; and thus far the French defence was certainly more thorough and philosophical than the English. But French freethought, which in Herbert's day had given the lead to English, now drew new energy from the English growth; and the general arguments of the old apologists did not explicitly meet the new attack. Their books having been written to meet the mostly unpublished objections of previous generations, the Church through its chosen policy had the air of utter inability to confute the newer propaganda, though some apologetic treatises of fair power did appear, in particular those of the Abbé Bergier.[3] By the avowal of a Christian historian, "So low had the talents of the once illustrious Church of France fallen that in the latter part of the eighteenth century, when Christianity itself was assailed, not one champion of note appeared in its ranks; and when the convocation of the clergy, in 1770, published their famous anathema against the dangers of unbelief, and offered rewards for the best

[1] The exceptions were books published outside of France.

[2] Madame de Sévigné, for instance, declared that she would not let pass a year of her life without re-reading the second volume of Abbadie.

[3] *Le Déisme refuté par lui-même* (largely a reply to Rousseau), 1765; 1770, *Apologie de la religion chrétienne;* 1773, *La certitude des preuves du christianisme.* In 1759 had appeared the *Lettres sur le Déisme* of the younger Salchi, professor at Lausanne. It deals chiefly with the English deists, and with D'Argens. As before noted, the Abbé Gauchat began in 1751 his *Lettres Critiques*, which in time ran to 15 volumes (1751–61). There were also two journals, Jesuit and Jansenist, which fought the *philosophes* (Lanson, p. 721); and sometimes even a manuscript was answered—*e.g.* the *Réfutation du Celse moderne* of the Abbé Gautier (1752), a reply to Mirabaud's unpublished *Examen critique.*

essays in defence of the Christian faith, the productions called forth were so despicable that they sensibly injured the cause of religion." [1]

The freethinking attack, in fact, had now become overwhelming. After the suppression of the Jesuit Order (1764)[2] the press grew practically more and more free; and when, after the accession of Pope Clement XIV (1769), the freethinking books circulated with less and less restraint, Bergier extended his attack on deism, and deists and clerics joined in answering the atheistic *Système de la Nature* of d'Holbach. But by this time the deistic books were legion, and the political battle over the taxation of Church property had become the more pressing problem, especially seeing that the mass of the people remained conforming. The manifesto of the clergy in 1770 was accompanied by an address to the king "On the evil results of liberty of thought and printing," following up a previous appeal by the pope;[3] and in consideration of the donation by the clergy of sixteen million livres the Government recommended the Parlement of Paris to proceed against impious books. There seems accordingly to have been some hindrance to publication for a year or two; but in 1772 appeared the *Bon Sens* of d'Holbach and Diderot; and there was no further serious check, the Jesuits being disbanded by the pope in 1773.

The English view that French orthodoxy made a "bad" defence to the freethinking attack as compared with what was done in England (Sir J. F. Stephen, *Horæ Sabbaticæ*, 2nd. ser. p. 281; Alison, as cited above) proceeds on some misconception of the circumstances, which, as has been shown, were substantially different in the two countries. Could the English clergy have resorted to official suppression of deistic literature, they too would doubtless have done so. Swift and Berkeley bitterly desired to. But the view that the English defence was relatively "good," and that Butler's in particular was decisive, is also, as we have seen, fallacious. In Sir Leslie Stephen's analysis, as apart from his preamble, the orthodox defence is exhibited as generally weak, and often absurd. Nothing could be more futile than the three "Pastoral Letters" published by the Bishop of London (1728, 1730, 1731) as counterblasts to the freethinking books of this period. In France the defence began sooner, and was more profound and even more methodical. Pascal at least went deeper, and Bossuet (in his *Discours sur*

[1] Alison, *History of Europe*, ed. 1849, i, 180–81.

[2] The Jesuits were expelled from Portugal in 1759; from Bohemia and Denmark in 1765; from the whole dominions of Spain in 1767; from Genoa and Venice in the same year; and from Naples, Malta, and Parma in 1768. Officially suppressed in France in 1764, they were expelled thence in 1767. Pope Clement XIII strove to defend them; but in 1773 the Society was suppressed by papal bull by Clement XIV; whereafter they took refuge in Prussia and Russia, ruled by the freethinking Frederick and Catherine.

[3] See the *Correspondance de Grimm*, ed. 1829–31, vii, 51 *sq.*

l'Histoire Universelle) more widely, into certain inward and outward problems of the controversy than did any of the English apologists; Huet produced, in his *Demonstratio Evangelica*, one of the most methodical of all the defensive treatises of the time; Abbadie, as before noted, gave great satisfaction, and certainly grappled zealously with Hobbes and Spinoza; Allix, though no great dialectician, gave a lead to English apologetics against the deists (above, p. 97), and was even adapted by Paley; and Fénelon, though his *Traité de l'Existence et des Attributs de Dieu* (1712) and *Lettres sur la Religion* (1716) are not very powerful processes of reasoning, contributed through his reproduced conversations (1710) with Ramsay a set of arguments at least as plausible as anything on the English side, and, what is more notable, marked by an amenity which almost no English apologist attained.

The ground had been thus very fully covered by the defence in France before the main battle in England began; and when a new French campaign commenced with Voltaire, the defence against that incomparable attack, so far as the system allowed of any, was probably as good as it could have been made in England, save insofar as the Protestants gave up modern miracles, while most of the Catholics claimed them for their Church. Counterblasts such as the essay of Linguet, *Le Fanatisme des Philosophes* (1764), were but general indictments of rationalism; and other apologetic treatises, as we saw, handled only the most prominent books on the other side. It should be noted, too, that as late as 1764 the police made it almost impossible to obtain in Paris works of Voltaire recently printed in Holland (Grimm, vii, 123, 133, 434). But, as Paley admitted with reference to Gibbon ("Who can refute a sneer?"), the new attack was in any case very hard to meet. A sneer is not hard to refute when it is unfounded, inasmuch as it implies a proposition, which can be rebutted or turned by another sneer. The Anglican Church had been well enough pleased by the polemic sneers of Swift and Berkeley; but the other side had the heavier guns, and of the mass of defences produced in England nothing remains save in the neat compilation of Paley. Alison's whole avowal might equally well apply to anything produced in England as against Voltaire. The skeptical line of argument for faith had been already employed by Huet and Pascal and Fénelon, with visibly small success; Berkeley had achieved nothing with it as against English deism; and Butler had no such effect in his day in England as to induce French Catholics to use him. (He does not appear to have been translated into French till 1821.)

An Oratorian priest, again, translated the anti-deistic essays of President Forbes; and the *Pensées Theologiques relatives aux erreurs du temps* of Père Jamin (1768; 4e édit. 1773) were

thought worthy of being translated into German, poor as they were. With their empty affirmation of authority they suggest so much blank cartridge, which could avail nothing with thinking men; and here doubtless the English defence makes a better impression. But, on the other hand, Voltaire circulated widely in England, and was no better answered there than in France. His attack was, in truth, at many points peculiarly baffling, were it only by its inimitable wit. The English replies to Spinoza, again, were as entirely inefficient or deficient as the French; the only intelligent English answers to Hume on Miracles (the replies on other issues were of no account) made use of the French investigations of the Jansenist miracles; and the replies to Gibbon were in general ignominious failures.

Finally, though the deeper reasonings of Diderot were over the heads alike of the French and the English clergy, the *Système de la Nature* of d'Holbach was met skilfully enough at many points by G. J. Holland (1772), who, though not a Frenchman, wrote excellent French, and supplied for French readers a very respectable rejoinder;[1] whereas in England there was practically none. In this case, of course, the defence was deistic; as was that of Voltaire, who criticized d'Holbach as Bolingbroke attacked Spinoza and Hobbes. But the *Examen du Matérialisme* of the Abbé Bergier (1771), who was a member of the Academy of Sciences, was at least as good as anything that could then have been done in the Church of England; and the same may be said of his reply to Freret's (really Burigny's) *Examen*. It is certainly poor enough; but Bishop Watson used some of its arguments for his reply to Paine. Broadly speaking, as we have said, much more of French than of English intelligence had been turned to the dispute in the third quarter of the century. In England, political and industrial discussion relieved the pressure on creed; in France, before the Revolution, the whole habit of absolutism tended to restrict discussion to questions of creed; and the attack would in any case have had the best of it, because it embodied all the critical forces hitherto available. The controversy thus went much further than the pre-Humian issues raised in England; and the English orthodoxy of the end of the century was, in comparison, intellectually as weak as politically and socially it was strong. In France, from the first, the greater intellectual freedom in social intercourse, exemplified in the readiness of women to declare themselves freethinkers (cp. Jamin, as cited, ch. xix, § 1), would have made the task of the apologists harder even had they been more competent.

16. Above the scattered band of minor combatants rises a group

[1] This apologetic work, after having been praised by the censor and registered with *privilège du roi* in November, 1772, was officially suppressed on Jan. 17, 1773, and, it would appear, reissued in that year.

of writers of special power, several of whom, without equalling Voltaire in ubiquity of influence, rivalled him in intellectual power and industry. The names of DIDEROT, D'HOLBACH, D'ALEMBERT, HELVÉTIUS, and CONDORCET are among the first in literary France of the generation before the Revolution; after them come VOLNEY and DUPUIS; and in touch with the whole series stands the line of great mathematicians and physicists (to which also belongs D'Alembert), LAPLACE, LAGRANGE, LALANDE, DELAMBRE. When to these we add the names of MONTESQUIEU, BUFFON, CHAMFORT, RIVAROL, VAUVENARGUES; of the materialists LA METTRIE and CABANIS; of the philosophers CONDILLAC and DESTUTT DE TRACY; of the historian RAYNAL; of the poet ANDRÉ CHÉNIER; of the politicians TURGOT, MIRABEAU, DANTON, DESMOULINS, ROBESPIERRE—all (save perhaps Raynal) deists or else pantheists or atheists—it becomes clear that the intelligence of France was predominantly rationalistic before the Revolution, though the mass of the nation certainly was not.

It is necessary to deprecate Mr. Lecky's statement (*Rationalism in Europe*, i, 176) that "Raynal has taken, with Diderot, a place in French literature which is probably permanent"—an estimate as far astray as the declaration on the same page that the English deists are buried in "unbroken silence." Raynal's vogue in his day was indeed immense (cp. Morley, *Diderot*, ch. xv); and Edmond Scherer (*Études sur la litt. du 18e Siècle*, 1891, pp. 277–78) held that Raynal's *Histoire philosophique des deux Indes* had had more influence on the French Revolution than even Rousseau's *Contrat Social*. But the book has long been discredited (cp. Scherer, pp. 275–76). A biographical Dictionary of 1844 spoke of it as "cet ouvrage ampoulé qu'on ne lit pas aujourd'hui." Although the first edition (1770) passed the censure only by means of bribery, and the second (1780) was publicly burned, and its author forced to leave France, he was said to reject, in religion, "only the pope, hell, and monks" (Scherer, p. 286); and most of the anti-religious declamation in the first edition of the *Histoire* is said to be from the pen of Diderot, who wrote it very much at random, at Raynal's request.

No list of orthodox names remotely comparable with these can be drawn from the literature of France, or indeed of any other country of that time. JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU (1712–1778), the one other pre-eminent figure, though not an anti-Christian propagandist, is distinctly on the side of deism. In the *Contrat Social*,[1]

[1] Liv. i, ch. viii.

writing with express approbation of Hobbes, he declares that "the Christian law is at bottom more injurious than useful to the sound constitution of the State"; and even the famous *Confession of Faith of a Savoyard Vicar* in the *Émile* is anti-revelationist, and practically anti-clerical. He was accordingly anathematized by the Sorbonne, which found in *Émile* nineteen heresies; the book was seized and burned both at Paris and at Geneva within a few weeks of its appearance,[1] and the author decreed to be arrested; even the *Contrat Social* was seized and its vendors imprisoned. All the while he had maintained in *Émile* doctrines of the usefulness of religious delusion and fanaticism. Still, although his temperamental way of regarding things has a clear affinity with some later religious philosophy of a more systematic sort, he undoubtedly made for freethought as well as for the revolutionary spirit in general. Thus the cause of Christianity stood almost denuded of intellectually eminent adherents in the France of 1789; for even among the writers who had dealt with public questions without discussing religion, or who had criticized Rousseau and the *philosophes*—as the Abbés Mably, Morellet, Millot—the tone was essentially rationalistic.

It has been justly enough argued, concerning Rousseau (see below, p. 287), that the generation of the Revolution made him its prophet in his own despite, and that had he lived twenty years longer he would have been its vehement adversary. But this does not alter the facts as to his influence. A great writer of emotional genius, like Rousseau, inevitably impels men beyond the range of his own ideals, as in recent times Ruskin and Tolstoy, both anti-Socialists, have led thousands towards Socialism. In his own generation and the next, Rousseau counted essentially for criticism of the existing order; and it was the revolutionaries, never the conservatives, who acclaimed him. De Tocqueville (*Hist. philos. du règne de Louis XV*, 1849, i, 33) speaks of his "impiété dogmatique." Martin du Theil, in his *J. J. Rousseau apologiste de la religion chrétienne* (2e édit. 1840), makes out his case by identifying emotional deism with Christianity, as did Rousseau himself when he insisted that "the true Christianity is only natural religion well explained." Rousseau's praise of the gospel and of the character of Jesus was such as many deists acquiesced in. Similar language, in the mouth of Matthew Arnold, gave rather more offence to Gladstone, as a believing Christian, than did the language of simple unbelief; and a recent Christian polemist, at the close of a copious monograph, has repudiated the association of Rousseau with the faith (see J. F. Nourrisson, *J. J. Rousseau et le Rousseauisme*, 1903, p. 497 *sq.*). What is true of him is

[1] Bachaumont, juin 22; juillet 9, 20, 27; novembre 14, 1762.

that he was more religiously a theist than Voltaire, whose impeachment of Providence in the poem on the Earthquake of Lisbon he sought strenuously though not very persuasively to refute in a letter to the author. But, with all his manifold inconsistencies, which may be worked down to the neurosis so painfully manifest in his life and in his relations to his contemporaries, he never writes as a believer in the dogmas of Christianity or in the principle of revelation; and it was as a deist that he was recognized by his Christian contemporaries. A demi-Christian is all that Michelet will call him. His compatriot the Swiss pastor Roustan, located in London, directed against him his *Offrande aux Autels et à la Patrie, ou Défense du Christianisme* (1764), regarding him as an assailant. The work of the Abbé Bergier, *Le Déisme refuté par lui-même* (1765, and later), takes the form of letters addressed to Rousseau, and is throughout an attack on his works, especially the *Émile*. When, therefore, Buckle (1-vol. ed. p. 475) speaks of him as not having attacked Christianity, and Lord Morley (*Rousseau*, ch. xiv) treats him as creating a religious reaction against the deists, they do not fully represent his influence on his time. As we have seen, he stimulated Voltaire to new audacities by his example.

17. An interlude in the critical campaign, little noticed at the time, developed importance a generation later. In 1753 JEAN ASTRUC, doctor of medicine, published after long hesitation his *Conjectures on the original documents which Moses seems to have used in composing the book of Genesis*. Only in respect of his flash of insight into the composite structure of the Pentateuch was Astruc a freethinker. His hesitation to publish was due to his fear that *les pretendus esprits forts* might make a bad use of his work; and he was quite satisfied that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch as it stands. The denial of that authorship, implied in the criticisms of Hobbes and Spinoza, he described as "the disease of the last century." This attitude may explain the lack of interest in Astruc's work shown by the freethinkers of the time.[1] Nonetheless, by his perception of the clue given by the narrative use of the two names Yahweh and Elohim in Genesis, he laid a new foundation of the Higher Criticism of the Bible in modern times, advancing alike on Spinoza and on Simon. For freethought he had "builded better than he knew."

[1] Grimm notices Astruc's *Dissertations sur l'immortalité, l'immaterialité, et la liberté de l'âme*, published in 1755 (*Corr.* i, 438), but not his *Conjectures*. At his death (1766) he pronounces him "un des hommes les plus decriés de Paris," "Il passait pour fripon, fourbe, méchant, en un mot pour un très-malhonnête homme." "Il était violent et emporté, et d'une avarice sordide." Finally, he died "sans sacremens" after having "fait le dévot" and attached himself to the Jesuits in their day of power. *Corr.* v, 98. But Grimm was a man of many hates, and not the best of historians.

18. In the select Parisian arena of the Académie, the intellectual movement of the age is as it were dramatized; and there more clearly than in the literary record we can trace the struggle of opinions, from the admission of Voltaire (1746) onwards. In the old days the Académie had been rather the home of convention, royalism, and orthodoxy than of ideas, though before Voltaire there were some freethinking members of the lesser Académies, notably Boindin.[1] The admission of Montesquieu (1728), after much opposition from the court, preludes a new era; and from the entrance of Voltaire, fourteen years after his first attempt,[2] the atmosphere begins perceptibly to change. When, in 1727, the academician Bonamy had read a memoir *On the character and the paganism of the emperor Julian*, partly vindicating him against the aspersions of the Christian Fathers, the Academy feared to print the paper, though its author was a devout Catholic.[3] When the Abbé La Bletterie, also orthodox, read to the Academy portions of his *Vie de Julien*, the members were not now scandalized, though the Abbé's Jansenism moved the King to veto his nomination. So, when Blanchard in 1735 read a memoir on *Les exorcismes magiques* there was much trepidation among the members, and again the Secretary inserted merely an analysis, concluding with the words of Philetas, "Believe and fear God; beware of questioning."[4] Even such a play of criticism as the challenging of the early history of Rome by Lévesque de Pouilly (brother of Lévesque de Burigny) in a dissertation before the Académie in 1722, roused the fears and the resentment of the orthodox; the Abbé Sallier, in undertaking to refute him, insinuated that he had shown a spirit which might be dangerous to other beliefs; and whispers of atheism passed among the academicians.[5] Pouilly, who had been made a freethinker by English contacts, went again to England later, and spent his last years at Rheims.[6] His thesis was much more powerfully sustained in 1738 by Beaufort, in the famous dissertation *Sur l'incertitude des cinq premiers siècles de l'histoire romaine;* but Beaufort was of a refugee-Huguenot stock; his book was published, under his initials, at Utrecht; and not till 1753 did the Académie award him a medal—on the score of an earlier treatise. And in 1748 the *Religio veterum Persarum* of the English Orientalist Hyde, published as long before as 1700, found a

[1] Cp. Maury, *L'ancienne Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres*, 1864, pp. 55–56.
[2] Voltaire's various stratagems to secure election are not to his credit. See Paul Mesnard, *Histoire de l'académie française*, 1857, pp. 68–74. But even Montesquieu is said to have resorted to some questionable devices for the same end. *Id.* p. 62.
[3] Maury, *L'ancienne Académie des inscriptions*, pp. 54–55, 94, 308.
[4] *Id.* p. 93. [5] *Id.* pp. 116–20.
[6] Where he was lieutenant-général, and died in 1750.

vehement assailant within the Academy in the Abbé Foucher, who saw danger in a favourable view of any heathen religion.

Yet even in the time of Louis XIV the Abbé Mongault, tutor of the son of the Regent, and noted alike for his private freethinking and for the rigid orthodoxy which he instilled into his pupil, treated the historic subject of the divine honours rendered to Roman governors with such latitude as to elicit from Freret, in his *éloge* of Mongault, the remark that the tutor had reserved to himself a liberty of thought which he doubtless felt to be dangerous in a prince.[1] And after 1750 the old order can be seen passing away. D'Argenson notes in his diary in 1754: "I observe in the Académie de belles-lettres, of which I am a member, that there begins to be a decided stir against the priests. It began to show itself at the death of Boindin, to whom our bigots refused a service at the Oratory and a public commemoration. Our deist philosophers were shocked, and ever since, at each election, they are on guard against the priests and the bigots. Nowhere is this division so marked, and it begins to bear fruits."[2] The old statesman indicates his own sympathies by adding: "Why has a bad name been made of the title of *deist?* It is that of those who have true religion in their hearts, and who have abjured a superstition that is destructive to the whole world." It was in this year that D'Alembert, who took nearly as much pains to stay out as Voltaire had done to enter,[3] was elected a member; and with two leading *encyclopédistes* in the forty, and a friendly abbé (Duclos) in the secretaryship (1755), and another zealous freethinker, Lévesque de Burigny, admitted in 1756,[4] the fortunes of freethought were visibly rising. Its influence was thrown on the side of the academic orator Thomas, a sincere believer but a hater of all persecution, and as such offensive to the Church party.[5]

19. In 1759 there came a check. The *Encyclopédie*, which had been allowed to resume publication after its first suppression in 1752, was again stopped; and the battle between *philosophes* and fanatics, dramatized for the time being in Palissot's comedy *Les Philosophes* and in Voltaire's rejoinder to Fréron, *L'Écossaise*, came to be fought out in the Academy itself. The poet Lefranc de Pompignan,[6] elected in 1759 without any opposition from the freethinkers, had in his youth translated Pope's "Deist's Prayer," and had suffered for it to the extent of being deprived by D'Aguesseau of

[1] Maury, pp. 53, 86-87.
[2] *Mémoires*, ed. Jannet, iv, 181.
[3] Cp. Mesnard, as cited, pp. 79-80.
[4] Maury, p. 315.
[5] *Id.* pp. 82-84. It is noteworthy that the orthodox Thomas, and not any of the *philosophes*, was the first to impeach the Government in academic discourses. Mesnard, pp. 82-84, 100 *sq.*
[6] "L'excellent Pompignan," M. Lanson calls him, p. 723.

his official charge[1] for six months. With such a past, with a keen concern for status, and with a character that did not stick at tergiversation, Pompignan saw fit to signalize his election by making his *discours de réception* (March, 1760) a violent attack on the whole philosophic school, which, in his conclusion, he declared to be undermining "equally the throne and the altar." The academicians heard him out in perfect silence, leaving it to the few pietists among the audience to applaud; but as soon as the reports reached Ferney there began the vengeance of Voltaire. First came a leaflet of stinging sentences, each beginning with *Quand :* "*When* one has translated and even exaggerated the 'Deist's Prayer' composed by Pope.....," and so on. The maddened Pompignan addressed a fatuous memorial to the King (who notoriously hated the *philosophes*, and had assented only under petticoat influence to Voltaire's election[2]); and, presuming to print it without the usual official sanction, suffered at the hands of Malesherbes the blow of having the printer's plant smashed. Other combatants entered the fray. Voltaire's leaflet "les *quand*" was followed by "les *si*, les *pour*, les *qui*, les *quoi*, les *car*, les *ah !*"—by him or others—and the master-mocker produced in swift succession three satires in verse,[3] all accompanied by murderous prose annotations. The speedy result was Pompignan's retirement into provincial life. He could not face the merciless hail of rejoinders; and when at his death, twenty-five years later, the Abbé Maury had to pronounce his *éloge*, the mention of his famous humiliation was hardly tempered by compassion.[4]

20. Voltaire could not compass, as he for a time schemed, the election of Diderot; but other *philosophes* of less note entered from time to time;[5] Marmontel was elected in 1763; and when in 1764 the Academy's prize for poetry was given to Chamfort for a piece which savoured of what were then called "the detestable principles of Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Helvétius," and in 1768 its prize for eloquence went to the same writer, the society as a whole had acquired a certain character for impiety.[6] In 1767 there had occurred the famous ecclesiastical explosion over Marmontel's philosophic romance *Bélisaire*, a performance in which it is somewhat difficult to-day to detect any exciting quality. It was by a chapter in praise of toleration that the "universal and mediocre

[1] "Les provisions de sa charge pendant six mois en 1736." Voltaire, Lettre à Mme. D'Épinay, 13 juin, 1760. "Je le servis dans cette affaire," adds Voltaire.
[2] Mesnard, pp. 67, 71, 73, 89.
[3] *Le Pauvre Diable, ouvrage en vers aisés de feu M. Vadé, mis en lumière par Catherine Vadé, sa cousine* (falsely dated 1758); *La Vanité;* and *Le Russe à Paris.*
[4] Mesnard, pp. 86–92. [5] *Id.* pp. 93–94. [6] *Id.* pp. 95–96.

Marmontel"[1] secured from the Sorbonne the finest advertisement ever given to a work of fiction, the ecclesiastics of the old school being still too thoroughly steeped in the past to realize that a gospel of persecution was a bad warcry for a religion that was being more and more put on the defensive. Only an angry fear before the rising flood of unlicensed literature, combining with the long-baffled desire to strike some blow at freethinking, could have moved the Sorbonne to select for censure the duly licensed work[2] of a popular academician and novelist; and it should be remembered that it was at a time of great activity in the unlicensed production of freethinking literature that the attack was made. The blow recoiled signally. The book was of course promptly translated into all the languages of Europe, selling by tens of thousands;[3] and two sovereigns took occasion to give it their express approval. These were the Empress Catherine (who caused the book to be translated by members of her court while she was making a tour of her empire, she herself taking a chapter), and the Empress Maria-Theresa. From Catherine, herself a freethinker, the approbation might have been expected; but the known orthodoxy and austerity of Maria-Theresa made her support the more telling. In France a small literary tempest raged for a year. Marmontel published his correspondence with the syndic of the Sorbonne and with Voltaire; and in all there appeared some dozen documents *pro* and *con*, among them an anonymous satire by Turgot, *Les xxxvii verités opposées aux xxxvii impiétés de Bélisaire*, "Par un Bachelier Ubiquiste,"[4] which, with the contributions of Voltaire, gave the victim very much the best of the battle.

21. Alongside of the more strictly literary or humanist movement, too, there went on one of a scientific kind, which divided into two lines, a speculative and a practical. On the former the free-lance philosopher JULIEN OFFRAY LA METTRIE gave a powerful initial push by his materialistic theses, in which a medical knowledge that for the time was advanced is applied with a very keen if unsystematic reasoning faculty to the primary problem of mind and body; and others after him continued the impulse. La Mettrie produced his *Natural History of the Mind* in 1745;[5] and in 1746

[1] Lanson, *Hist. de la litt. française*, p. 725.

[2] The formal approval of a Sorbonnist was necessary. One refused it; another gave it. Marmontel, *Mémoires*, 1804, iii, 35–36.

[3] Marmontel mentions that while he was still discussing a compromise with the syndic of the Sorbonne, 40,000 copies had been sold throughout Europe. *Mémoires*, iii, 39.

[4] This satire was taken by the German freethinker Eberhard, in his *New Apology for Socrates*, as the actual publication of the Sorbonne. Barbier, *Dict. des Ouvr. anon et Pseud.*, 2é edit. i, 468.

[5] Published pseudonymously as a translation from the English: *Histoire naturelle de l'âme*, traduite de l'Anglais de M. Charp, par feu M. H——, de l'Académie des Sciences. A La Haye, 1745. Republished under the title *Traité de l'Âme*.

appeared the *Essay on the Origin of Human Knowledge* of the Abbé CONDILLAC, both essentially rationalistic and anti-theological works, though differing in their psychological positions, Condillac being a non-materialist, though a strong upholder of "sensism." La Mettrie followed up his doctrine with the more definitely materialistic but less heedfully planned works, *L'Homme Plante* and *L'Homme Machine* (1748), the second of which, published at Leyden[1] and wickedly dedicated to the pious Baron von Haller, was burned by order of the magistrates, its author being at the same time expelled from Holland. Both books are remarkable for their originality of thought, biological and ethical. Though La Mettrie professed to think the "greatest degree of probability" was in favour of the existence of a personal God,[2] his other writings gave small support to the hypothesis; and even in putting it he rejects any inference as to worship. And he goes on to quote very placidly an atheist who insists that only an atheistic world can attain to happiness. It is notable that he, the typical materialist of his age, seems to have been one of its kindliest men, by the consent of all who knew him,[3] though heedless in his life to the point of ending it by eating a monstrous meal out of bravado.

The conventional denunciation of La Mettrie (endorsed by Lord Morley, *Voltaire*, p. 122) proceeds ostensibly upon those of his writings in which he discussed sexual questions with absolute scientific freedom. He, however, insisted that his theoretic discussion had nothing whatever to do with his practice; and there is no evidence that he lived otherwise than as most men did in his age, and ours. Still, the severe censure passed on him by Diderot (*Essai sur les règnes de Claude et de Néron*, ed. 1782, ii, 22–24) seems to convict him of at least levity of character. Voltaire several times holds the same tone. But Diderot writes so angrily that his verdict incurs suspicion.

As Lange notes, there has been much loose generalization as to the place and bearing of La Mettrie in the history of French thought. Hettner, who apparently had not thought it worth while to read him, has ascribed his mental movement to the influence of Diderot's *Pensées philosophiques* (1746), whereas it had begun in his own *Histoire naturelle de l'âme*, published a year before. La Mettrie's originality and influence in general

[1] By Elie Luzac, to whom is ascribed the reply entitled *L'Homme plus que Machine* (1748 also). This is printed in the *Œuvres philosophiques* of La Mettrie as if it were his; and Lange (i, 420) seems to think it was. But the bibliographers ascribe it to Luzac, who was a man of culture and ability.

[2] *L'Homme Machine*, ed. Assézat, 1865, p. 97; *Œuv. philos.* ed. 1774, iii, 51.

[3] Lange, *Gesch. des Materialismus*, i, 362 *sq.* (Eng. tr. ii, 78–80); Soury, *Bréviare de l'hist. du matérialisme*, pp. 663, 666–68; Voltaire, *Homélie sur l'athéisme*, end. Frederick the Great, who gave La Mettrie harbourage, support, and friendship, and who was not a bad judge of men, wrote and read in the Berlin Academy the funeral éloge of La Mettrie, and pronounced him "une âme pure et un cœur serviable." By "pure" he meant sincere.

have been underestimated as a result of the hostility set up by disparagement of his character. The idea of a fundamental unity of type in nature—an idea underlying all the successive steps of Lamarck, Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, Goethe, and others, towards the complete conception of evolution—is set forth by him in *L'Homme Plante* in 1748, the year in which appeared De Maillet's *Telliamed*. Buffon follows in time as in thought, only beginning his great work in 1749; Maupertuis, with his pseudonymous dissertation on the *Universal system of Nature*, applies La Mettrie's conception in 1751; and Diderot's *Pensées sur l'interprétation de la nature*, stimulated by Maupertuis, appeared only in 1754. La Mettrie proceeded from the classification of Linnæus, but did not there find his idea. In the words of Lange, "these forgotten writings are in nowise so empty and superficial as is commonly assumed." *Gesch. des Materialismus*, i, 328–29. Lange seems to have been the first to make a judicial study of La Mettrie's work, as distinguished from the scandals about his character.

22. A more general influence, naturally, attached to the simple concrete handling of scientific problems. The interest in such questions, noticeable in England at the Restoration and radiating thence, is seen widely diffused in France after the publication of Fontenelle's *Entretiens*, and thenceforward it rapidly strengthens. Barren theological disputations set men not merely against theology, but upon the study of Nature, where real knowledge was visibly possible. To a certain extent the study took openly heretical lines. The Abbé Lenglet du Fresnoy, who was four times imprisoned in the Bastille, supplied material of which D'Argens made much use, tending to overthrow the Biblical chronology and to discredit the story of the Flood.[1] Benoît de Maillet (1656–1738), who had been for fifteen years inspector of the French establishments in Egypt and Barbary, left for posthumous publication (1748) a work of which the first title was an anagram of his name, *Telliamed, ou Entretiens d'un philosophe indien avec un missionaire français*. Of this treatise the thesis is that the shell deposits in the Alps and elsewhere showed the sea to have been where land now was; and that the rocks were gradually deposited in their different kinds in the fashion in which even now are being formed mud, sand, and shingle. De Maillet had thus anticipated the central conception of modern geology, albeit retaining many traditional delusions. His abstention from publication during his lifetime testifies to his sense of the danger he underwent, the treatise having been printed by him only in 1735, at the

[1] Salchi, *Lettres sur le Déisme*, 1759, pp. 177, 197, 239, 283 *sq.*

age of seventy-nine; and not till ten years after his death was it given to the world, with "a preface and dedication so worded as, in case of necessity, to give the printer a fair chance of falling back on the excuse that the work was intended for a mere *jeu d'esprit*."[1]

The thesis was adopted, indeed plagiarized,[2] by Mirabaud in his *Le Monde, son origine et son antiquité* (1751). Strangely enough, Voltaire refused to be convinced, and offered amazing suggestions as to the possible deposit of shells by pilgrims.[3] It is not unlikely that it was Voltaire's opposition rather than any orthodox argumentation that retarded in France the acceptance of an evolutionary view of the origin of the earth and of life. It probably had a more practical effect on scientific thought in England[4]—at least as regards geology: its speculations on the modification of species, which loosely but noticeably anticipate some of the inferences of Darwin, found no acceptance anywhere till Lamarck. In the opinion of Huxley, the speculations of Robinet, in the next generation, "are rather behind than in advance of those of De Maillet";[5] and it may be added that the former, with his pet theory that all Nature is "animated," and that the stars and planets have the faculty of reproducing themselves like animals, wandered as far from sound bases as De Maillet ever did. The very form of De Maillet's work, indeed, was not favourable to its serious acceptance; and in his case, as in those of so many pioneers of new ideas, errors and extravagances and oversights in regard to matters of detail went to justify "practical" men in dismissing novel speculations. Needless to say, the common run of scientific men remained largely under the influence of religious presuppositions in science even when they had turned their backs on the Church. Nonetheless, on all sides the study of natural fact began to play its part in breaking down the dominion of creed. Even in hidebound Protestant Switzerland, the sheer ennui of Puritanism is seen driving the descendants of the Huguenot refugees to the physical sciences for an interest and an occupation, before any free-thinking can safely be avowed; and in France, as Buckle has shown in abundant detail, the study of the physical sciences became for many years before the Revolution almost a fashionable mania. And at the start the Church had contrived that such study should rank as unbelief, and so make unbelievers.

[1] Huxley, essay on *Darwin on the Origin of Species*; R. P. A. ed. of *Twelve Lectures and Essays*, p. 94.

[2] See the parallel passages in the *Lettres Critiques* of the Abbé Gauchat, vol. xv (1761), p. 192 *sq.*

[3] See his essay *Des Singularités de la Nature*, ch. xii, and his *Dissertation sur les changements arrivés dans notre globe.*

[4] Eng. tr. 1750.

[5] Essay cited, p. 96. The criticism ignores the greater comprehensiveness of Robinet's survey of nature.

When Buffon[1] in 1749–50 published his *Histoire Naturelle*, the delight which was given to most readers by its finished style was paralleled by the wrath which its *Théorie de la Terre* aroused among the clergy. After much discussion Buffon received early in 1751 from the Sorbonne an official letter specifying as reprehensible in his book fourteen propositions which he was invited to retract. He stoically obeyed in a declaration to the effect that he had "no intention to contradict the text of Scripture," and that he believed "most firmly all there related about the creation," adding: "I abandon everything in my book respecting the formation of the earth."[2] Still he was attacked as an unbeliever by the Bishop of Auxerre in that prelate's pastoral against the thesis of de Prades.[3] During the rest of his life he outwardly conformed to religious usage, but all men knew that in his heart he believed what he had written; and the memory of the affront that the Church had thus put upon so honoured a student helped to identify her cause no less with ignorance than with insolence and oppression. For all such insults, and for the long roll of her cruelties, the Church was soon to pay a tremendous penalty.

23. But science, like theology, had its schisms, and the rationalizing camp had its own strifes. MAUPERTUIS, for instance, is remembered mainly as one of the victims of the mockery of Voltaire (which he well earned by his own antagonism at the court of Frederick); yet he was really an energetic man of science, and had preceded Voltaire in setting up in France the Newtonian against the Cartesian physics. In his *System of Nature*[4] (not to be confused with the later work of d'Holbach under the same title) he in 1751 propounded a new version of the hylozoisms of ancient Greece; developed the idea of an underlying unity in the forms of natural life, already propounded by La Mettrie in his *L'Homme Plante;* connected it with Leibnitz's formula of the economy of nature ("minimum of action"—the germ of the modern "line of least resistance"), and at the same time anticipated some of the special philosophic positions of Kant.[5] Diderot, impressed by but professedly dissenting from Maupertuis's *Système* in his *Pensées sur l'interprétation de la nature* (1754), promptly pointed out that the conception

[1] George-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, 1707–1788.
[2] Lyell, *Principles of Geology*, 12th ed. 1875, i, 57–58.
[3] *Suite de l'Apologie de M. l'Abbé De Prades*, 1752, p. 37 *sq.*
[4] *Dissertatio inauguralis metaphysica de universali naturæ systemate*, published at Göttingen as the doctoral thesis of an imaginary Dr. Baumann, 1751. In French, 1753.
[5] Soury, p. 579. The later speculations of Maupertuis by their extravagance discredited the earlier.

of a primordially vitalized atom excluded that of a Creator, and for his own part thereafter took that standpoint.[1]

In 1754 came the *Traité des Sensations* of Condillac, in which is most systematically developed the physio-psychological conception of man as an "animated statue," of which the thought is wholly conditioned by the senses. The mode of approach had been laid down before by La Mettrie, by Diderot, and by Buffon; and Condillac is rather a developer and systematizer than an originator;[2] but in this case the process of unification was to the full as important as the first steps;[3] and Condillac has an importance which is latterly being rediscovered by the school of Spencer on the one hand and by that of James on the other. Condillac, commonly termed a materialist, no more held the legendary materialistic view than any other so named; and the same may be said of the next figure in the "materialistic" series, J. B. ROBINET, a Frenchman settled at Amsterdam, after having been, it is said, a Jesuit. His *Nature* (4 vols. 1761–1768) is a remarkable attempt to reach a strictly naturalistic conception of things.[4] But he is a theorist, not an investigator. Even in his fixed idea that the universe is an "animal" he had perhaps a premonition of the modern discovery of the immense diffusion of bacterial life; but he seems to have had more deriders than disciples. He founds at once on Descartes and on Leibnitz, but in his *Philosophical Considerations on the natural gradation of living forms* (1768) he definitely sets aside theism as illusory, and puts ethics on a strictly scientific and human footing,[5] extending the arguments of Hume and Hutcheson somewhat on the lines of Mandeville.[6] On another line of reasoning a similar application of Mandeville's thesis had already been made by HELVÉTIUS in his *Traité de l'Esprit*[7] (1758), a work which excited a hostility now difficult to understand, but still reflected in censures no less surprising.

> One of the worst misrepresentations in theological literature is the account of Helvétius by the late Principal Cairns (*Unbelief in the Eighteenth Century*, 1881, p. 158) as appealing to government "to promote luxury, and, through luxury, public good, by abolishing all those laws that cherish a false modesty and restrain

1 "Scheinbar bekämpft er Maupertuis desswegen, aber im geheimen stimmt er ihm bei" (Rosenkranz, i, 144).

2 It should be noted that by Condillac's avowal he was much aided by his friend Mdlle. Ferrand.

3 Cp. Réthoré, *Condillac, ou l'empirisme et le rationalisme*, 1864, ch. i.

4 Lange, ii, 27, 29; Soury, pp. 603–44.

5 Soury, pp. 596–600; Lange, ii, 27.

6 Oddly enough he became ultimately press censor! He lived till 1820, dying at Rennes at the age of 85.

7 This may best be translated *Treatise on the Mind*. The English translation of 1759 (rep. 1807) is entitled *De l'Esprit: or, Essays on the Mind*, etc.

libertinage." Helvétius simply pressed the consequences of the existing theory of luxury, which for his own part he disclaimed. *De l'Esprit*, Disc. ii, ch. xv. Dr. Pünjer (i, 462) falls so far below his usual standard as to speak of Helvétius in a similar fashion. As against such detraction it is fitting to note that Helvétius, like La Mettrie, was one of the most lovable and most beloved men of his time, though, like him, sufficiently licentious in his youth.

It was at once suppressed by royal order as scandalous, licentious, and dangerous, though Helvétius held a post at court as *maître d'hôtel* to the Queen. Ordered to make a public retractation, he did so in a letter addressed to a Jesuit; and this being deemed insufficient, he had to sign another, "so humiliating," wrote Grimm,[1] "that one would not have been astonished to see a man take refuge with the Hottentots rather than put his name to such avowals." The wits explained that the censor who had passed the book, being an official in the Bureau of Foreign Affairs, had treated *De l'Esprit* as belonging to that department.[2] A swarm of replies appeared, and the book was formally burnt, with Voltaire's poem *Sur la loi naturelle*, and several obscure works of older standing.[3] The *De l'Esprit*, appearing alongside of the ever-advancing *Encyclopédie*,[4] was in short a formidable challenge to the powers of bigotry.

Its real faults are lack of system, undue straining after popularity, some hasty generalization, and a greater concern for the air of paradox than for persuasion; but it abounds in acuteness and critical wisdom, and it definitely and seriously founds public ethics on utility. Its most serious error, the assumption that all men are born with equal faculties, and that education is the sole differentiating force, was repeated in our own age by John Stuart Mill; but in Helvétius the error is balanced by the thoroughly sound and profoundly important thesis that the general superiorities of *nations* are the result of their culture-conditions and politics.[5] The overbalance of his stress on self-interest[6] is an error easily soluble. On the other hand, we have the memorable testimony of BECCARIA that it was the work of Helvétius that inspired him to his great effort for the humanizing of penal laws and policy;[7] and the only

[1] *Correspondance*, ii, 262. [2] *Id.* p. 263. [3] *Id.* p. 293.

[4] At the time the pietists declared that Diderot had collaborated in *De l'Esprit*. This was denied by Grimm, who affirmed that Diderot and Helvétius were little acquainted, and rarely met; but his Secretary, Meister, wrote in 1786 that the finest pages in the book were Diderot's. *Id.* p. 294, *note*. In his sketch *À la mémoire de Diderot* (1786, app. to Naigeon's *Mémoires*, 1821, p. 425, *note*), Meister speaks of a number of "belles pages," but does not particularize. [5] *De l'Esprit*, Disc. iii, ch. 30.

[6] Cp. Morley's criticism, *Diderot*, ed. 1884, pp. 331–32.

[7] Beccaria's Letter to Morellet, cited in ch. i of J. A. Farrer's ed. of the *Crimes and Punishments*, p. 6. It is noteworthy that the partial reform effected earlier in England

less notable testimony of Bentham that Helvétius was *his* teacher and inspirer.[1] It may be doubted whether any such fruits can be claimed for the teachings of the whole of the orthodox moralists of the age. For the rest, Helvétius is not to be ranked among the great abstract thinkers; but it is noteworthy that his thinking went on advancing to the end. Always greatly influenced by Voltaire, he did not philosophically harden as did his master; and though in his posthumous work, *Les Progrès de la Raison dans la recherche du Vrai* (published in 1775), he stands for deism against atheism, the argument ends in the pantheism to which Voltaire had once attained, but did not adhere.

24. Over all of these men, and even in some measure over Voltaire, DIDEROT (1713–1784) stands pre-eminent, on retrospect, for variety of power and depth and subtlety of thought; though for these very reasons, as well as because some of his most masterly works were never printed in his lifetime, he was less of a recognized popular force than some of his friends. In his own mental history he reproduces the course of the French thought of his time. Beginning as a deist, he assailed the contemporary materialists; in the end, with whatever of inconsistency, he was emphatically an atheist and a materialist. One of his most intimate friends was Damilaville, of whom Voltaire speaks as a vehement anti-theist;[2] and his biographer Naigeon, who at times overstated his positions but always revered him, was the most zealous atheist of his day.[3]

Compare, as to Diderot's position, Soury's contention (p. 577) that we shall never make an atheist and a materialist out of "this enthusiastic artist, this poet-pantheist" (citing Rosenkranz in support), with his own admissions, pp. 589–90, and with Lord Morley's remarks, pp. 33, 401, 418. See also Lange, i, 310 *sq.;* ii, 63 (Eng. tr. ii, 32, 256). In the affectionate *éloge* of his friend Meister (1786) there is an express avowal that "it had been much to be desired for the reputation of Diderot, perhaps even for the honour of his age, that he had not been an atheist, or that he had been so with less zeal." The fact is thus put beyond reasonable doubt. In the *Correspondance Littéraire* of Grimm and Diderot, under date September 15, 1765 (vii, 366), there is a letter in criticism of Descartes, thoroughly atheistic in its reasoning, which is almost certainly by Diderot. And if the criticism of Voltaire's *Dieu*, above referred to (p. 231), be not by him, he was certainly in entire agreement with it, as with Grimm in general. Rosenkranz

by Oglethorpe, on behalf of imprisoned debtors (1730–32), belongs to the time of propagandist deism there.

[1] Morley, *Diderot*, p. 329.

[2] Lettre à d'Alembert, 9 janvier, 1773.

[3] Cp. Rosenkranz, *Vorbericht*, p. vi.

finally (ii, 421) sums up that "Diderot war als Atheist Pantheist," which is merely a way of saying that he was scientifically monistic in his atheism. Lange points out in this connection (i, 310) that the Hegelian schema of philosophic evolution, "with its sovereign contempt for chronology," has wrought much confusion as to the real developments of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

It is recorded that Diderot's own last words in serious conversation were: "The beginning of philosophy is incredulity"; and it may be inferred from his writings that his first impulses to searching thought came from his study of Montaigne, who must always have been for him one of the most congenial of spirits.[1] At an early stage of his independent mental life we find him turning to the literature which in that age yielded to such a mind as his the largest measure both of nutriment and stimulus—the English. In 1745 he translated Shaftesbury's *Inquiry concerning Virtue and Merit;* and he must have read with prompt appreciation the other English freethinkers then famous. Ere long, however, he had risen above the deistical plane of thought, and grappled with the fundamental issues which the deists took for granted, partly because of an innate bent to psychological analysis, partly because he was more interested in scientific problems than in scholarly research. The *Pensées philosophiques*, published in 1746, really deserve their name; and though they exhibit him as still a satisfied deist, and an opponent of the constructive atheism then beginning to suggest itself, they contain abstract reasonings sufficiently disturbing to the deistic position.[2] The *Promenade du Sceptique* (written about 1747, published posthumously) goes further, and presents tentatively the reply to the design argument which was adopted by Hume.

In its brilliant pages may be found a conspectus of the intellectual life of the day, on the side of the religious problem. Every type of thinker is there tersely characterized—the orthodox, the deist, the atheist, the sheer skeptic, the scoffer, the pantheist, the solipsist, and the freethinking libertine, the last figuring as no small nuisance to the serious unbeliever. So drastic is the criticism of orthodoxy that the book was unprintable in its day;[3] and it was little known even in manuscript. But ere long there appeared the *Letter on the Blind, for the use of those who see* (1749), in which a logical rebuttal alike of the ethical and the cosmological assumptions of theism, developed from hints in the *Pensées*, is put in the mouth of the blind English

[1] Cp. Morley, *Diderot*, ed. 1884, p. 32. [2] *E.g.* § 21.
[3] A police agent seized the MS. in Diderot's library, and Diderot could not get it back. Malesherbes, the censor, kept it safe for him!

mathematician, Sanderson. It is not surprising that whereas the *Pensées* had been, with some other books, ordered by the Paris Parlement to be burnt by the common hangman, the *Lettre sur les Aveugles* led to his arrest and an imprisonment of six months[1] in the Château de Vincennes. Both books had of course been published without licence;[2] but the second book was more than a defiance of the censorship: it was a challenge alike to the philosophy and the faith of Christendom; and as such could not have missed denunciation.[3]

But Diderot was not the kind of man to be silenced by menaces. In the famous Sorbonne thesis of the Abbé de Prades (1751) he probably had, as we have seen, some share; and when De Prades was condemned and deprived of his licence (1752) Diderot wrote the third part of the *Apologie* (published by De Prades in Holland), which defended his positions, and possibly assisted in the other parts.[4] The hand of Diderot perhaps may be discovered in the skilful allusions to the skeptical *Demonstratio Evangelica* of Huet, which De Prades professes to have translated when at his seminary, seeking there the antidote to the poison of the deists. The entire handling of the question of pagan and Christian miracles, too, suggests the skilled dialectician, though it is substantially an adaptation of Leslie's *Short and Easy Method with the Deists*. The alternate eulogy and criticism of Locke are likely to be his, as is indeed the abundant knowledge of English thought shown alike in the thesis and in the *Apologie*. Whether he wrote the passage which claims to rebut an argument in his own *Pensées philosophiques*[5] is surely doubtful. But his, certainly, is the further reply to the pastoral of the Jansenist Bishop of Auxerre against de Prades's thesis, in which the perpetual disparagement of reason by Catholic theologians is denounced[6] as the most injurious of all procedures against religion. And his, probably, is the peroration[7] arraigning the Jansenists and

[1] According to Naigeon (*Mémoires*, 1821, p. 131), three months and ten days.

[2] The *Lettre* purports, like so many other books of that and the next generation, to be published "A Londres."

[3] Diderot's daughter, in her memoir of him, speaks of his imprisonment in the Bastille as brought about through the resentment of a lady of whom he had spoken slightingly; and her husband left a statement in MS. to the same effect (printed at the end of the *Mémoires* by Naigeon). The lady is named as Madame Dupré de Saint-Maur, a mistress of the King, and the offence is said to have been committed in the story entitled *Le Pigeon blanc*. Howsoever this may have been, the prosecution was quite in the spirit of the period, and the earlier *Pensées* were made part of the case against him. See Delort, *Hist. de la détention des philosophes*, 1829, ii, 208–16. M. de Vandeul-Diderot testifies that the Marquis Du Chatelet, Governor of Vincennes, treated his prisoner very kindly. Buckle (1-vol. ed. p. 425) does not seem to have fully read the *Lettre*, which he describes as merely discussing the differentiation of thought and sensation among the blind.

[4] His friend Meister (*À la mémoire de Diderot*, 1786, app. to Naigeon's *Mémoires de Diderot*, 1821, p. 424) writes as if Diderot had written the whole *Apologie* "in a few days." The third part, a reply to the pastoral of the Bishop of Auxerre, appeared separately as a *Suite* to the others.

[5] *Apologie*, as cited, 2e partie, p. 87 *sq.*

[6] *Observations sur l'instruction pastorale de Mons. l'Évêque d'Auxerre*, Berlin, 1752, p. 17.

[7] *Id.* p. 102 *sq.*

imputing to their fanaticism and superstition, their miracle-mongering and their sectarian bitterness, the discredit which among thinking men had latterly fallen upon Church and creed alike.[1]

De Prades, who in his thesis and *Apologie* had always professed to be a believing Christian, was not a useful recruit to rationalism. Passing from Holland to Berlin, he was there appointed, through the influence of Voltaire, reader and amanuensis to the King,[2] who in 1754 arranged for him an official reconciliation with the Church. A formal retractation was sent to the Pope, the Sorbonne, and the Bishop of Montauban;[3] and Frederick in due course presented him to a Catholic canonry at Glogau. In 1757, however, he was put under arrest on the charge, it is commonly said, of supplying military information to his countrymen;[4] and thereafter, returning to France in 1759, he obtained a French benefice. Diderot, who was now a recognized champion of freethought, turned away with indignation.

Thenceforward he never faltered on his path. It is his peculiar excellence to be an original and innovating thinker not only in philosophy but in psychology, in æsthetics, in ethics, in dramatic art; and his endless and miscellaneous labours in the *Encyclopédie*, of which he was the most loyal and devoted producer, represent an extraordinary range of interests. He suffered from his position as a hack writer and as a forced dissembler in his articles on religious matters; and there is probably a very real connection between his compulsory insincerities[6] in the *Encyclopédie*—to say nothing of the official prosecution of that and of others of his works—and his misdeeds in the way of indecent fiction. When organized society is made to figure as the heartless enemy of thinking men, it is no great wonder if they are careless at times about the effect of their writings on society. But it stands to his lasting honour that his sufferings at the hands of priests, printers, and *parlements* never soured his natural goodness of heart.[7] Having in his youth known a day's unrelieved hunger, he made a vow that he would never refuse help to any human being; and, says his daughter, no vow was ever more faithfully kept. No one in trouble was ever turned away from his

[1] Cp. Morley, *Diderot*, pp. 98–99.
[2] Carlyle, *Frederick*, bk. xviii, ch. ix, *end*
[3] D'Argenson, *Mémoires*, iv, 188.
[4] Carlyle, as cited.
[5] "Quelle abominable homme!" he writes to Mdlle. Voland (15 juillet, 1759); and Lord Morley pronounces de Prades a rascal (*Diderot*, p. 98). Carlyle is inarticulate with disgust—but as much against the original heresy as against the treason to Frederick. As to that, Thiébault was convinced that de Prades was innocent and calumniated. Everybody at court, he declares, held the same view. *Mes Souvenirs de vingt ans de séjour à Berlin*, 2e édit. 1805, v, 402–404.
[6] It is not clear how these are to be distinguished from the mutilations of the later volumes by his treacherous publisher Le Breton. Of this treachery the details are given by Grimm, *Corr. litt.* ed. 1829, vii, 144 *sq.*
[7] Buckle's account of him (1-vol. ed. p. 426) as "burning with hatred against his persecutors" after his imprisonment is overdrawn. He was a poor hater.

door; and even his enemies were helped when they were base enough to beg of him. It seems no exaggeration to say that the bulk of his life was given to helping other people; and the indirect effect of his work, which is rather intellectually disinterested than didactic, is no less liberative and humanitarian. "To do good, and to find truth," were his mottoes for life.

His daughter, Madame de Vandeul, who in her old age remained tranquilly divided between the religion instilled into her by her pious mother and the rationalism she had gathered from her father and his friends, testified, then, to his constant goodness in the home;[1] and his father bore a similar testimony, contrasting him with his pious brother.[2] He was, in his way, as beneficent as Voltaire, without Voltaire's faults of private malice; and his life's work was a great ministry of light. It was Goethe who said of him in the next generation that "whoever holds him or his doings cheaply is a Philistine." His large humanity reaches from the planes of expert thought to that of popular feeling; and while by his *Letter on the Blind* he could advance speculative psychology and pure philosophy, he could by his tale *The Nun* (*La Religeuse*,[3] written about 1760, published 1796) enlist the sympathies of the people against the rule of the Church. It belonged to his character to be generously appreciative of all excellence; he delighted in other men's capacity as in pictures and poetry; and he loved to praise. At a time when Bacon and Hobbes were little regarded in England he made them newly famous throughout Europe by his praises. In him was realized Bacon's saying, *Admiratio semen scientiae*, in every sense, for his curiosity was as keen as his sensibility.

25. With Diderot were specially associated, in different ways, D'ALEMBERT, the mathematician, for some years his special colleague on the *Encyclopédie*, and Baron D'HOLBACH. The former, one of the staunchest friends of Voltaire, though a less invincible fighter than Diderot, counted for practical freethought by his miscellaneous articles, his little book on the Jesuits (1765), his *Pensées philosophiques*, his physics, and the general rationalism of his Preliminary

[1] Madame Diderot, says her daughter, was very upright as well as very religious, but her temper, "éternellement grondeur, faisait de notre intérieur un enfer, dont mon père était l'ange consolateur" (Letter to Meister, in *Notice* pref. to *Lettres Inédites de Mme. de Staël à Henri Meister*, 1903, p. 62).

[2] "Hélas! disait mon excellent grand-père, j'ai deux fils: l'un sera sûrement un saint, et je crains bien que l'autre ne soit damné; mais je ne puis vivre avec le saint, et je suis très heureux du temps que je passe avec le damné" (Letter of Mme. de Vandeul, last cited). Freethinker as he was, his fellow-townsmen officially requested in 1780 to be allowed to pay for a portrait of him for public exhibition, and the bronze bust he sent them was placed in the hôtel de ville (MS. of M. de Vandeul-Diderot, as cited).

[3] Madame de Vandeul states that this story was motived by the case of Diderot's sister, who died mad at the age of 27 or 28 (Letter above cited; Rosenkranz, i, 9).

Discourse to the *Encyclopédie*. It is noteworthy that in his intimate correspondence with Voltaire he never avows theism, and that his and Diderot's friend, the atheist Damilaville, died in his arms.[1] On Dumarsais, too, he penned an of which *éloge* Voltaire wrote: "Dumarsais only begins to live since his death; you have given him existence and immortality."[2] And perpetual secretary as he was of the Academy, the fanatical daughter of Madame Geoffrin could write to him in 1776: "For many years you have set all respectable people against you by your indecent and imprudent manner of speaking against religion."[3] Baron d'Holbach, a naturalized German of large fortune, was on the other hand one of the most strenuous propagandists of freethought in his age. Personally no less beloved than Helvétius,[4] he gave his life and his fortune to the work of enlightening men on all the lines on which he felt they needed light. Much of the progress of the physical sciences in pre-revolutionary France was due to the long series—at least eleven in all—of his translations of solid treatises from the German; and his still longer series of original works and translations from the English in all branches of freethought—a really astonishing movement of intellectual energy despite the emotion attaching to the subject-matter—was for the most part prepared in the same essentially scientific temper. Of all the freethinkers of the period he had perhaps the largest range of practical erudition;[5] and he drew upon it with unhasting and unresting industry. Imitating the tactic of Voltaire, he produced, with some assistance from Diderot, Naigeon, and others, a small library of anti-Christian treatises under a variety of pseudonyms;[6] and his principal work, the famous *System of Nature* (1770), was put out under the name of Mirabaud, an actual person, then dead. Summing up as it does with stringent force the whole anti-theological propaganda of the age, it has been described as a "thundering engine of revolt and destruction."[7]

[1] Lettre de Voltaire à D'Alembert, 27 août, 1774.
[2] Lettre de 2 décembre, 1757.
[3] *Œuvres posthumes de D'Alembert*, 1799, i, 240.
[4] D'Holbach was the original of the character of Wolmar in Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse*, of whom Julie says that he "does good without recompense." "I never saw a man more simply simple" was the verdict of Madame Geoffrin. *Corr. litt. de Grimm* (notice probably by Meister), ed. 1829–31, xiv, 291.
[5] Marmontel says of him that he "avoit tout lu et n'avoit jamais rien oublié d'interessant." *Mémoires*, 1804, ii, 312.
[6] See a full list of his works (compiled by Julian Hibbert after the list given in the 1821 ed. of Diderot's Works, xii, 115, and rep. in the 1829–31 ed. of Grimm and Diderot's *Correspondance*, xiv, 293), prefixed to Watson's ed. (1834 and later) of the English translation of the *System of Nature*.
[7] Morley, *Diderot*, p. 341. The chapter gives a good account of the book. Cp. Lange, i, 364 *sq.* (Eng. trans. ii, 26 *sq.*) as to its materialism. The best pages were said to be by Diderot (*Corr. de Grimm*, as cited, p. 289; the statement of Meister, who makes it also in his *Éloge*). Naigeon denied that Diderot had any part in the *Système*, but in 1820 there was published an edition with "notes and corrections" by Diderot.

It was the first published atheistic[1] treatise of a systematic kind, if we except that of Robinet, issued some years before; and it significantly marks the era of modern freethought, as does the powerful *Essai sur les préjugés*, published in the same year,[2] by its stern impeachment of the sins of monarchy—here carrying on the note struck by Jean Meslier in his manuscript of half-a-century earlier. Rather a practical argument than a dispassionate philosophic research, its polemic against human folly laid it open to the regulation retort that on its own necessarian principles no such polemic was admissible. That retort is, of course, ultimately invalid when the denunciation is resolved into demonstration. If, however, it be termed "shallow" on the score of its censorious treatment of the past,[3] the term will have to be applied to the Hebrew books, to the Gospel Jesus, to the Christian Fathers, to Pascal, Milton, Carlyle, Ruskin, and a good many other prophets, ancient and modern. The synthesis of the book is really emotional rather than philosophic, and hortatory rather than scientific; and it was all the more influential on that account. To the sensation it produced is to be ascribed the edict of 1770 condemning a whole shelf of previous works to be burnt along with it by the common hangman.

26. The death of d'Holbach (1789) brings us to the French Revolution. By that time all the great freethinking propagandists and non-combatant deists of the Voltairean group were gone, save CONDORCET. Voltaire and Rousseau had died in 1778, Helvétius in 1771, Turgot in 1781, D'Alembert in 1783, Diderot in 1784. After all their labours, only the educated minority, broadly speaking, had been made freethinkers; and of these, despite the vogue of the *System of Nature*, only a minority were atheists. Deism prevailed, as we have seen, among the foremost revolutionists; but atheism was relatively rare. Voltaire, indeed, impressed by the number of cultured men of his acquaintance who avowed it, latterly speaks[4] of them as very numerous; and Grimm must have had a good many among the subscribers to his correspondence, to permit of his

[1] It is to be noted that the English translation (3 vols. 3rd ed. 1817; 4th ed. 1820) deliberately tampers with the language of the original to the extent of making it deistic. This perversion has been by oversight preserved in all the reprints.

[2] Mirabeau spoke of the *Essai* as "le livre le moins connu, et celui qui mérite le plus l'être." Even the reprint of 1793 had become "extremely rare" in 1822. The book seems to have been specially disquieting to orthodoxy, and was hunted down accordingly.

[3] So Morley, p. 347. It does not occur to Lord Morley, and to the Comtists who take a similar tone, that in thus disparaging past thinkers they are really doing the thing they blame.

[4] *Lettres de Memmius à Cicéron* (1771); *Histoire de Jenni* (1775). In the earlier article, ATHÉE, in the *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, he speaks of having met in France very good physicists who were atheists. In his letter of September 26, 1770, to Madame Necker, he writes concerning the *Système de la Nature:* "Il est un peu honteux à notre nation que tant de gens aient embrassé si vite une opinion si ridicule." And yet Prof. W. M. Sloane, of Columbia University, still writes of Voltaire, in the manner of English bishops, as "atheistical" (*The French Revolution and Religious Reform*, 1901, p. 26).

penning or passing the atheistic criticism there given of Voltaire's first reply to d'Holbach. Nevertheless, there was no continuous atheistic movement; and after 1789 the new freethinking works run to critical and ethical attack on the Christian system rather than on theism. VOLNEY combined both lines of attack in his famous *Ruins of Empires* (1791); and the learned DUPUIS, in his voluminous *Origin of all Cults* (1795), took an important step, not yet fully reckoned with by later mythologists, towards the mythological analysis of the gospel narrative. After these vigorous performances, the popular progress of French freethought was for long practically suspended[1] by the tumult of the Revolution and the reaction which followed it, though LAPLACE went on his way with his epoch-making theory of the origin of the solar system, for which, as he told Napoleon, he had "no need of the hypothesis" of a God. The admirable CONDORCET had died, perhaps by his own hand, in 1794, when in hiding from the Terrorists, leaving behind him his *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain*, in which the most sanguine convictions of the rationalistic school are reformulated without a trace of bitterness or of despair.

27. No part of the history of freethought has been more distorted than that at which it is embroiled in the French Revolution. The conventional view in England still is that the Revolution was the work of deists and atheists, but chiefly of the latter; that they suppressed Christianity and set up a worship of a Goddess of Reason, represented by a woman of the town; and that the bloodshed of the Terror represented the application of their principles to government, or at least the political result of the withdrawal of religious checks.[2] Those who remember in the briefest summary the records of massacre connected with the affirmation of religious beliefs—the internecine wars of Christian sects under the Roman Empire; the vast slaughters of Manichæans in the East; the bloodshed of the period of propagation in Northern Europe, from Charlemagne onwards; the story of the Crusades, in which nine millions of human beings are estimated to have been destroyed; the generation of wholesale murder of the heretics of Languedoc by the papacy; the protracted savageries of the Hussite War; the early holocaust of Protestant heretics in France; the massacres of

[1] Though in 1797 we have Maréchal's *Code d'une Société d'hommes sans Dieu*, and in 1798 his *Pensées libres sur les prêtres*.

[2] Thus Dr. Cairns (*Unbelief in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 165) gravely argues that the French Revolution proves the inefficacy of theism without a Trinity to control conduct. He has omitted to compare the theistic bloodshed of the Revolution with the Trinitarian bloodshed of the Crusades, the papal suppression of the Albigenses, the Hussite wars, and other orthodox undertakings.

German peasants and Anabaptists; the reciprocal persecutions in England; the civil strifes of sectaries in Switzerland; the ferocious wars of the French Huguenots and the League; the long-drawn agony of the war of thirty years in Germany; the annihilation of myriads of Mexicans and Peruvians by the conquering Spaniards in the name of the Cross—those who recall these things need spend no time over the proposition that rationalism stands for a removal of restraints on bloodshed. But it is necessary to put concisely the facts as against the legend in the case of the French Revolution.

(*a*) That many of the leading men among the revolutionists were deists is true; and the fact goes to prove that it was chiefly the men of ability in France who rejected Christianity. Of a number of these the normal attitude was represented in the work of Necker, *Sur l'importance des idées religieuses* (1787), which repudiated the destructive attitude of the few, and may be described as an utterance of pious theism or Unitarianism.[1] Orthodox he cannot well have been, since, like his wife, he was the friend of Voltaire.[2] But the majority of the Constituent Assembly was never even deistic; it professed itself cordially Catholic;[3] and the atheists there might be counted on the fingers of one hand.[4]

The Abbé Bergier, in answering d'Holbach (*Examen du Matérialisme*, ii, ch. i, § 1), denies that there has been any wide spread of atheistic opinion. This is much more probable than the statement of the Archbishop of Toulouse, on a deputation to the king in 1775, that "le monstrueux athéisme est devenu l'opinion dominante" (Soulavie, *Règne de Louis XVI*, iii, 16; cited by Buckle, 1-vol. ed. p. 488, *note*). Joseph Droz, a monarchist and a Christian, writing under Louis Philippe, sums up that "the atheists formed only a small number of adepts" (*Histoire du Règne de Louis XVI*, éd. 1839, p. 42). And Rivarol, who at the time of writing his *Lettres à M. Necker* was substantially an atheist, says in so many words

[1] The book was accorded the Monthyon prize by the French Academy. In translation (1788) it found a welcome in England among Churchmen by reason of its pro-Christian tone and its general vindication of religious institutions. The translation was the work of Mary Wollstonecraft. See Kegan Paul's *William Godwin*, 1876, i, 193. Mrs. Dunlop, the friend of Burns, recommending its perusal to the poet, paid it a curious compliment: "He does not write like a sectary, *hardly like a Christian*, but yet while I read him, I like better my God, my neighbour, Monsieur Necker, and myself." *Robert Burns and Mrs. Dunlop*, ed. by W. Wallace, 1898, p. 258.

[2] See Voltaire's letters to Madame Necker, *Corr. de Grimm*, ed. 1829, vii, 23, 118. Of the lady, Grimm writes (p. 118): "Hypathie Necker passe sa vie avec des systématiques, mais elle est devote à sa manière. Elle voudrait être sincèrement hugenote, ou socinienne, ou déistique, ou plutôt, pour être quelque chose, elle prend le parti de ne se rendre compte sur rien." "Hypathie" was Voltaire's complimentary name for her.

[3] Cp. Aulard, *Le Culte de la Raison et le Culte de l'Être Suprême*, 1892, pp. 17–19. M. Gazier (*Études sur l'histoire religieuse de la révolution française*, 1877, pp. 48, 173, 189 *sq.*) speaks somewhat loosely of a prevailing anti-Christian feeling when actually citing only isolated instances, and giving proofs of a general orthodoxy. Yet he points out the complete misconception of Thiers on the subject (p. 202).

[4] Cp. Prof. W. M. Sloane, *The French Revolution and Religious Reform*, p. 43.

that, while Rousseau's "Confession of a Savoyard Vicar" was naturally very attractive to many, such a book as the *Système de la Nature*, "were it as attractive as it is tedious, would win nobody" (*Œuvres*, éd. 1852, p. 134). Still, it ran into seven editions between 1770 and 1780.

Nor were there lacking vigorous representatives of orthodoxy: the powerful Abbé Grégoire, in particular, was a convinced Jansenist Christian, and at the same time an ardent democrat and anti-royalist.[1] He saw the immense importance to the Church of a good understanding with the Revolution, and he accepted the constitution of 1790. With him went a very large number of priests. M. Léonce de Lavergne, who was pious enough to write that "the philosophy of the eighteenth century had had the audacity to lay hands on God; and this impious attempt has had for punishment the revolutionary expiation," also admits that, "of the clergy, it was not the minority but the majority which went along with the Tiers État."[2] Many of the clergy, however, being refractory, the Assembly pressed its point, and the breach widened. It was solely through this *political* hostility on the part of the Church to the new constitution that any civic interference with public worship ever took place. Grégoire was extremely popular with the advanced types,[3] though his piety was conspicuous;[4] and there were not a few priests of his way of thinking,[5] among them being some of the ablest bishops.[6] On the flight of the king, he and they went with the democracy; and it was the obstinate refusal of the others to accept the constitution that provoked the new Legislative Assembly to coerce them. Though the new body was more anti-clerical than the old, however, it was simply doing what successive Protestant monarchs had done in England and Ireland; and probably no Government in the world would then have acted otherwise in a similar case.[7] Patience might perhaps have won the day; but the Revolution was fighting for its life; and the conservative Church, as all men knew, was eager to strangle it. Had the clergy left politics alone, or simply accepted the constitutional action of the State, there would have been no religious question. To speak of such a body of priests, who had at all times been eager to put men to death for heresy, as vindicating "liberty of conscience" when they refused fealty to the constitution,[8] is somewhat to strain the terms.

[1] Gazier, as cited, pp. 2, 4, 12, 19–21, 71, etc.
[2] *Les Assemblées Provinciales sous Louis XVI*, 1864, pref. pp. viii–ix.
[3] Gazier, L. ii, ch. i. [4] *Id.* p. 67. [5] *Id.* p. 69. [6] Léonce de Lavergne, as cited.
[7] The authority of Turgot himself could be cited for the demand that the State clergy should accept the constitution of the State. Cp. Aulard, *Le Culte de la Raison*, p. 12; Tissot, *Étude sur Turgot*, 1878, p. 160. [8] Gazier, p. 113.

The expulsion of the Jesuits under the Old Régime had been a more coercive measure than the demand of the Assembly on the allegiance of the State clergy. And all the while the reactionary section of the priesthood was known to be conspiring with the royalists abroad. It was only when, in 1793, the conservative clergy were seen to be the great obstacle to the levy of an army of defence, that the more radical spirits began to think of interfering with their functions.[1]

(*b*) An à priori method has served alike in freethinkers' and in pietists' hands to obscure the facts. When Michelet insists on the "irreconcilable opposition of Christianity to the Revolution"—a thesis in which he was heartily supported by Proudhon[2]—he means that the central Christian dogmas of salvation by sacrifice and faith exclude any political ethic of justice[3]—any doctrine of equality and equity. But this is only to say that Christianity as an organization is in perpetual contradiction with some main part of its professed creed; and that has been a commonplace since Constantine. It does not mean that either Christians in multitudes or their churches as organizations have not constantly proceeded on ordinary political motives, whether populist or anti-populist. In Germany we have seen Lutheranism first fomenting and afterwards repudiating the movement of the peasants for betterment; and in England in the next century both parties in the civil war invoke religious doctrines, meeting texts with texts. Jansenism was in constant friction with the monarchy from its outset; and Louis XIV and Louis XV alike regarded the Jansenists as the enemies of the throne. "Christianity" could be as easily "reconciled" with a democratic movement in the last quarter of the eighteenth century as with the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew's Day in the sixteenth. If those Christians who still charge "the bloodshed of the French Revolution" on the spirit of incredulity desire to corroborate Michelet to the extent of making Christianity the bulwark of absolute monarchy, the friend of a cruel feudalism, and the guardian genius of the Bastille, they may be left to the criticism of their fellow-believers who have embraced the newer principle that the truth of the Christian religion is to be proved by connecting it in practice with the spirit of social reform. To point out to either party, as did Michelet, that *evangelical* Christianity is a religion of submission and preparation for the end of all things, and has nothing to do with rational political reform,

[1] Aulard, *Culte*, pp. 19–20.
[2] Michelet, *Hist. de la révolution française*, ed. 8vo 1868 and later, i, 16. Cp. Proudhon's *De la justice*, 1858.
[3] "Tout jugement religieux ou politique est une contradiction flagrante dans une religion uniquement fondée sur un dogme étranger à la justice." Ed. cited, introd. p. 60.

is to bestow logic where logic is indomiciliable. While rationalism undoubtedly fosters the critical spirit, professed Christians have during many ages shown themselves as prone to rebellion as to war, whether on religious or on political pretexts.

(*c*) For the rest, the legend falsifies what took place. The facts are now established by exact documentary research. The Government never substituted any species of religion for the Catholic.[1] The Festival of Reason at Nôtre Dame was an act not of the Convention but of the Commune of Paris and the Department; the Convention had no part in promoting it; half the members stayed away when invited to attend; and there was no Goddess of Reason in the ceremony, but only a Goddess of Liberty, represented by an actress who cannot even be identified.[2] Throughout, the devoutly theistic Rousseau was the chief literary hero of the movement. The two executive Committees in no way countenanced the dechristianization of the Churches, but on the contrary imprisoned persons who removed church properties; and these in turn protested that they had no thought of abolishing religion. The acts of irresponsible violence did not amount to a hundredth part of the "sacrilege" wrought in Protestant countries at the Reformation, and do not compare with the acts charged on Cromwell's troopers. The policy of inviting priests and bishops to abdicate their functions was strictly political; and the Archbishop Gobel did *not* abjure Catholicism, but only surrendered his office. That a number of priests did gratuitously abjure their religion is only a proof of what was well known—that a good many priests were simple deists. We have seen how many abbés fought in the freethought ranks, or near them. Diderot in a letter of 1769 tells of a day which he and a friend had passed with two monks who were atheists. "One of them read the first draft of a very fresh and very vigorous treatise on atheism, full of new and bold ideas; I learned with edification that this doctrine was the current doctrine of their cloisters. For the rest, these two monks were the 'big bonnets' of their monastery; they had intellect, gaiety, good feeling, knowledge."[3] And a priest of the cathedral of Auxerre, whose recollections went back to the revolutionary period, has confessed that at that time "philosophic"

[1] The grave misstatement of Michelet on this head is exposed by Aulard, *Culte*, p. 60.

[2] Yet it is customary among Christians to speak of this lady in the most opprobrious terms. The royalist (but malcontent) Marquis de Villeneuve, who had seen the Revolution in his youth, claimed in his old age to have afterwards "conversed with the Goddess Reason of Paris and with the Goddess Reason of Bourges" (where he became governor); but, though he twice alludes to those women, he says nothing whatever against their characters (*De l'Agonie de la France*, 1835. i. 3, 19). Prof. W. M. Sloane, with all his religious prejudice, is satisfied that the women chosen as Goddesses of Reason outside of Paris were "noted for their spotless character." Work cited, p. 198.

[3] *Mémoires*, ed. 1841, ii, 166.

opinions prevailed in most of the monasteries. His words even imply that in his opinion the unbelieving monks were the majority.[1] In the provinces, where the movement went on with various degrees of activity, it had the same general character. "Reason" itself was often identified with deity, or declared to be an emanation thereof. Hébert, commonly described as an atheist for his share in the movement, expressly denied the charge, and claimed to have exhorted the people to read the gospels and obey Christ.[2] Danton, though at his death he disavowed belief in immortality, had declared in the Convention in 1793 that "we have not striven to abolish superstition in order to establish the reign of atheism."[3] Even Chaumette was not an atheist;[4] and the Prussian Cloots, who probably was, had certainly little or no doctrinary influence; while the two or three other professed atheists of the Assembly had no part in the public action.

(*d*) Finally, Robespierre was all along thoroughly hostile to the movement; in his character of Rousseauist and deist he argued that atheism was "aristocratic"; he put to death the leaders of the Cult of Reason; and he set up the Worship of the Supreme Being as a counter-move. Broadly speaking, he affiliated to Necker, and stood very much at the standpoint of the English Unitarianism of the present day. Thus the bloodshed of the Reign of Terror, if it is to be charged on any species of philosophic doctrine rather than on the unscrupulous policy of the enemies of the Revolution in and out of France, stands to the credit of the belief in a God, the creed of Frederick, Turgot, Necker, Franklin, Pitt, and Washington. The one convinced and reasoning atheist among the publicists of the Revolution, the journalist SALAVILLE,[5] opposed the Cult of Reason with sound and serious and persuasive argument, and strongly blamed all forcible interference with worship, while at the same time calmly maintaining atheism as against theism. The age of atheism had not come, any more than the triumph of Reason.

> Mallet du Pan specifies, as among those who "since 1788 have pushed the blood-stained car of anarchy and atheism," Chamfort, Gronvelle, Garat, and Cerutti. Chamfort was as high-minded a man as Mallet himself, and is to-day so recognized by every unprejudiced reader. The others are forgotten.

[1] Père F.-J.-F. Fortin, *Souvenirs*, Auxerre, 1867, ii, 41.
[2] See the speech in Aulard, *Culte*, p. 240; and cp. pp. 79–85.
[3] "Le peuple aura des fêtes dans lesquelles il offrira de l'encens à l'Être Suprême, au maître de la nature, car nous n'avons pas voulu anéantir la superstition pour établir le règne de l'athéisme." Speech of Nov. 26, 1793, in the *Moniteur*. (*Discours de Danton*, ed. André Fribourg, 1910, p. 599.)
[4] Aulard, *Culte*, pp. 81–82.
[5] Concerning whom see Aulard, *Culte*, pp. 86–96.

Gronvelle, who as secretary of the executive council read to Louis XVI his death-sentence, wrote *De l'autorité de Montesquieu dans la révolution présente* (1789). Garat was Minister of Justice in 1792 and of the Interior in 1793, and was ennobled by Napoleon. He had published *Considérations sur la Révolution* (1792) and a *Mémoire sur la Révolution* (1795). Cerutti, originally a Jesuit, became a member of the Legislative Assembly, and was the friend of Mirabeau, whose funeral oration he delivered.

28. The anti-atheistic and anti-philosophic legend was born of the exasperation and bad faith of the dethroned aristocracy, themselves often unbelievers in the day of their ascendancy, and, whether unbelievers or not, responsible with the Church and the court for that long insensate resistance to reform which made the revolution inevitable. Mere random denunciation of new ideas as tending to generate rebellion was of course an ancient commonplace. Medieval heretics had been so denounced; Wiclif was in his day; and when the Count de Cataneo attacked Montesquieu's *Spirit of Laws*, he spoke of all such reasonings as "attempts which shake the sacred basis of thrones."[1] But he and his contemporaries knew that freethinkers were not specially given to mutiny; and when, later, French Churchmen had begun systematically to accuse the philosophers of undermining alike the Church and the throne,[2] the unbelieving nobles, conscious of entire political conservatism, had simply laughed. Better than anyone else they knew that political revolt had other roots and motives than incredulity; and they could not but remember how many French kings had been rebelled against by the Church, and how many slain by priestly hands. Their acceptance of the priestly formula came later. In the life of the brilliant Rivarol, who associated with the noblesse while disdained by many of them because of his obscure birth, we may read the intellectual history of the case. Brilliant without patience, keen without scientific coherence,[3] Rivarol in 1787 met the pious deism of Necker with a dialectic in which cynicism as often disorders as illuminates the argument. With prompt veracity he first rejects the

[1] *The Source, the Strength, and the True Spirit of Laws*, Eng. tr. 1753, p. 6.

[2] *E.g.*, in the Arrêt du Parlement of 9 juin, 1762, denouncing Rousseau's *Émile* as tending to make the royal authority odious and to destroy the principle of obedience; and in the *Examen du Bélisaire de M. Marmontel*, by Coger (Nouv. éd. augm. 1767, p. 45 *sq.* Cp. Marmontel's *Mémoires*, 1804, iii, 46, as to his being called *ennemi du trône et de l'autel*). This kind of invective was kept up against the *philosophes* to the moment of the Revolution. See for instance *Le vrai religieux*, Discours dédié à Madame Louise de France, par le R. P. C. A. 1787, p. 4: "Une philosophie orgueilleuse a renversé les limites sacrées que la main du Très-Haut avoit elle-même élevées. La raison de l'homme a osé sonder les décrets de Dieu.....Dans les accès de son ivresse, n'a-t-elle pas sapé les fondemens du trône et des lois," etc.

[3] Cp. the admissions of Curnier (*Rivarol, sa vie et ses œuvres*, 1858, p. 149) in deprecation of Burke's wild likening of Rivarol's journalism to the Annals of Tacitus.

ideal of a beneficent reign of delusion, and insists that religion is seen in all history powerless alike to overrule men's passions and prejudices, and to console the oppressed by its promise of a reversal of earthly conditions in another world. But in the same breath, by way of proving that the atheist is less disturbing to convention than the deist, he insists that the unbeliever soon learns to see that "irreverences are crimes against society"; and then, in order to justify such conformity, asserts what he had before denied. And the self-contradiction recurs.[1] The underlying motive of the whole polemic is simply the grudge of the upper class diner-out against the serious and conscientious *bourgeois* who strives to reform the existing system. Conscious of being more enlightened, the wit is eager at once to disparage Necker for his religiosity and to discredit him politically as the enemy of the socially useful ecclesiastical order. Yet in his second letter *Sur la morale* (1788) he is so plainly an unbeliever that the treatise had to be printed at Berlin. The due sequence is that when the Revolution breaks out Rivarol sides with the court and the noblesse, while perfectly aware of the ineptitude and malfeasance of both;[2] and, living in exile, proceeds to denounce the philosophers as having caused the overturn by their universal criticism. In 1787 he had declared that he would not even have written his Letters to Necker if he were not certain that "the people does not read." Then the people had read neither the philosophers nor him. But in exile he must needs frame for the *émigrés* a formula, true or false. It is the falsity of men divided against themselves, who pay themselves with recriminations rather than realize their own deserts.[3] And in the end Rivarol is but a deist.

29. If any careful attempt be made to analyse the situation, the stirring example of the precedent revolution in the British American colonies will probably be recognized as counting for very much more than any merely literary influence in promoting that of France. A certain "republican" spirit had indeed existed among educated men in France throughout the reign of Louis XV: D'Argenson noted it in 1750 and later.[4] But this spirit, which D'Argenson in large measure shared, while holding firmly by monarchy,[5] was simply the spirit of *constitutionalism*, the love of law and good government, and it derived

[1] *Œuvres*, ed. cited, pp. 136–40, 147–55.

[2] Cp. the critique of Sainte-Beuve, prefixed to ed. cited, pp. 14–17, and that of Arsène Houssaye, *id.* pp. 31–33. Mr. Saintsbury, though biassed to the side of the royalist, admits that "Rivarol hardly knows what sincerity is" (*Miscellaneous Essays*, 1892, p. 67).

[3] Charles Comte is thus partly inaccurate in saying (*Traité de Législation*, 1835, i, 72) that the charge against the philosophers began "on the day on which there was set up a government in France that sought to re-establish the abuses of which they had sought the destruction." What is true is that the charge, framed at once by the backers of the Old Régime, has always since done duty for reaction.

[4] *Mémoires*, ed. Jannet, iii, 313; iv, 70; v, 346, 348.

[5] *Id.* iii, 346–47.

from English example and the teachings of such Englishmen as Locke,[1] insofar as it was not spontaneous. If acceptance of the doctrine of constitutional government can lead to anarchy, let it be avowed; but let not the cause be pretended to be deism or atheism. The political teaching for which the Paris Parlement denounced Rousseau's *Émile* in 1762, and for which the theologians of the Sorbonne censured Marmontel's *Bélisaire* in 1767, was the old doctrine of the sovereignty of the people. But this had been maintained by a whole school of English Protestant Christians before Bossuet denounced the Protestant Jurieu for maintaining it. Nay, it had been repeatedly maintained by Catholic theologians, from Thomas Aquinas to Suarez,[2] especially when there was any question of putting down a Protestant monarch. Protestants on their part protested indignantly, and reciprocated. The recriminations of Protestants and Catholics on this head form one of the standing farces of human history. Coger, attacking Marmontel, unctuously cites Bayle's censure of his fellow Protestants in his *Avis aux Réfugiéz*[3] for their tone towards kings and monarchy, but says nothing of Bayle's quarrel with Jurieu, which motived such an utterance, or of his *Critique Générale* of Maimbourg's *Histoire du Calvinisme*, in which he shows how the Catholic historian's principles would justify the rebellion alike of Catholics in every Protestant country and of Protestants in every Catholic country,[4] though all the while it is assumed that true Christians never resort to violence. And, unless there has been an error as to his authorship, Bayle himself, be it remembered, had in his letter *Ce que c'est que la France toute catholique sous le règne de Louis le Grand* passed as scathing a criticism on Louis XIV as any Protestant refugee could well have compassed. Sectarian hypocrisies apart, the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people—for opposing which the freethinker Hobbes has been execrated by generations of Christians—is the professed political creed of the very classes who, in England and the United States, have so long denounced French freethinkers for an alleged "subversive" social teaching which fell far short of what English and American Protestants had actually practised. The revolt of the American colonies, in fact, precipitated demo-

[1] D'Argenson, noting in his old age how "on n'a jamais autant parlé de *nation* et *d'État* qu'aujourd'hui," how no such talk had been heard under Louis XIV, and how he himself had developed on the subject, adds, "cela vient du parlement et des Anglois." He goes on to speak of a reissue of the translation of Locke on Civil Government, originally made by the Jansenists (*Mémoires*, iv, 189-90). [2] Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, ed. 1872, iii, 160-63.

[3] *Œuvres diverses de Pierre Bayle*, La Haye, 4 vols. fol. 1737, ii, 564 *sq.*

[4] This *Critique* appears in the very volume to which Coger refers for the *Avis aux Réfugiéz*. See Lett. viii, xiii, xvii, etc., vol. and ed. cited, pp. 36, 54, 71, etc.

cratic feeling in France in a way that no writing had ever done. Lafayette, no freethinker, declared himself republican at once on reading the American declaration of the Rights of Man.[1] In all this the freethinking propaganda counted for nothing directly and for little indirectly, inasmuch as there was no clerical quarrel in the colonies. And if we seek for even an indirect or general influence, apart from the affirmation of the duty of kings to their people, the thesis as to the activity of the *philosophes* must at once be restricted to the cases of Rousseau, Helvétius, Raynal, and d'Holbach, for Marmontel never passed beyond "sound" generalities.

As for the pretence that it was freethinking doctrines that brought Louis XVI to the scaffold, it is either the most impudent or the most ignorant of historical imputations. The "right" of tyrannicide had been maintained by Catholic schoolmen before the Reformation, and by both Protestants and Catholics afterwards, times without number, even as they maintained the right of the people to depose and change kings. The doctrine was in fact not even a modern innovation, the theory being so well primed by the practice—under every sort of government, Jewish and pagan in antiquity, Moslem in the Middle Ages, and Christian from the day of Pepin to the day of John Knox—that a certain novelty lay on the side of the "divine right of kings" when that was popularly formulated. And on the whole question of revolution, or the right of peoples to recast their laws, the general doctrine of the most advanced of the French freethinkers is paralleled or outgone by popes and Church Councils in the Middle Ages, by Occam and Marsiglio of Padua and Wiclif and more than one German legist in the fourteenth century, by John Major and George Buchanan in Scotland, by Goodman in England, and by many Huguenots in France, in the sixteenth; by Hotman in his *Francogallia* in 1574; by the author of the *Soupirs de la France Esclave*[2] in 1689; and by the whole propagandist literature of the English and American Revolutions in the seventeenth and eighteenth. So far from being a specialty of freethinkers, "sedition" was in all these and other cases habitually grounded on Biblical texts and religious protestations; so that Bacon, little given as he was to defending rationalists, could confidently avow that "Atheism leaves a man to sense, to philosophy, to natural piety, to laws, to reputation.....but superstition dismounts all these, and erecteth an absolute monarchy in the minds of men. Therefore atheism did never perturb states.....

[1] Cp. the survey of Aulard, *Hist. polit. de la rév. française*, 2e édit. 1903, pp. 2–23.
[2] Probably the work of a Jansenist.

But superstition hath been the confusion of many states." For "superstition" read "sectarianism," "fanaticism," and "ecclesiasticism." Bacon's generalization is of course merely empirical, atheism being capable of alliance with revolutionary passion in its turn; but the historical summary holds good. Only by men who had not read or had forgotten universal history could the ascription of the French Revolution to rationalistic thought have been made.[1]

30. A survey of the work and attitude of the leading French freethinkers of the century may serve to settle the point once for all. Voltaire is admittedly out of the question. Mallet du Pan, whose resistance to the Revolution developed into a fanaticism hardly less perturbing to judgment[2] than that of Burke, expressly disparaged him as having so repelled men by his cynicism that he had little influence on their feelings, and so could not be reckoned a prime force in preparing the Revolution.[3] "Mably," the critic adds, "whose republican declamations have intoxicated many modern democrats, was religious to austerity: at the first stroke of the tocsin against the Church of Rome, he would have thrown his books in the fire, excepting his scathing apostrophes to Voltaire and the atheists. Marmontel, Saint-Lambert, Morellet, Encyclopedists, were adversaries of the revolution."[4] On the other hand, Barante avows that Mably, detesting as he did the freethinking philosophers of his day, followed no less than others "a destructive course, and contributed, without knowing it, to weaken the already frayed ties which still united the parts of an ancient society."[5] As Barante had previously ascribed the whole dissolution to the autocratic process under Louis XIV,[6] even this indictment of the orthodox Mably is invalid. Voltaire, on the other hand, Barante charges with an undue leaning to the methods of Louis XIV. Voltaire, in fact, was in things political a conservative, save insofar as he fought for toleration, for lenity, and for the most necessary

[1] On the whole question of the growth of abstract revolutionary doctrine in politics cp. W. S. McKechnie on the *De Jure Regni apud Scotos* in the "George Buchanan" vol. of Glasgow Quatercentenary Studies, 1906, pp. 256-76; Gierke, *Political Theories of the Middle Ages*, Maitland's tr. 1900, p. 37 *sq.*

[2] Mallet actually reproaches the *philosophes* in the mass—while admitting the hostility of many of them to the Revolution—with "having accelerated French degeneration and depravation.....by rendering the conscience argumentative (*raisonneuse*), by substituting for duties inculcated by sentiment, tradition, and habit, the *uncertain rules of the human reason* and sophisms adapted to passions," etc., etc. (B. Mallet, as cited, p. 360). With all his natural vigour of mind, Mallet du Pan thus came to talk the language of the ordinary irrationalist of the Reaction. Certainly, if the stimulation of the habit of reasoning be a destructive course, the philosophes stand condemned. But as Christians had been reasoning as best they could, in an eternal series of vain disputes, for a millennium and a-half before the Revolution, with habitual appeal to the passions, the argument only proves how vacuous a Christian champion's reasoning can be.

[3] Art. in *Mercure Britannique*, No. 13, Feb. 21, 1799; cited by B. Mallet in *Mallet du Pan and the French Revolution*, 1902, App. p. 357.

[4] *Id.* p. 359.

[5] *Tableau littéraire du dix-huitième siècle*, 3e édit. pp. 112, 113.

[6] *Id.* p. 72.

reforms. And if Voltaire's attack on what he held to be a demoralizing and knew to be a persecuting religion be saddled with the causation of the political crash, the blame will have to be carried back equally to the English deists and the tyranny of Louis XIV. To such indictments, as Barante protests, there is no limit: every age pivots on its predecessor; and to blame for the French Revolution everybody but a corrupt aristocracy, a tyrannous and ruinously spendthrift monarchy, and a cruel church, is to miss the last semblance of judicial method. It may be conceded that the works of Meslier and d'Holbach, neither of whom is noticed by Barante, are directly though only generally revolutionary in their bearing. But the main works of d'Holbach appeared too close upon the Revolution to be credited with generating it; and Meslier, as we know, had been generally read only in abridgments and adaptations, in which his political doctrine disappears.

Mallet du Pan, striking in all directions, indicts alternately Rousseau, whose vogue lay largely among religious people, and the downright freethinkers. The great fomenter of the Revolution, the critic avows, was Rousseau. "He had a hundred times more readers than Voltaire in the middle and lower classes.....No one has more openly attacked the right of property in declaring it a usurpation.....It is he alone who has inoculated the French with the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people, and with its most extreme consequences."[1] After this "he alone," the critic obliviously proceeds to exclaim: "Diderot and Condorcet: there are the true chiefs of the revolutionary school," adding that Diderot had "proclaimed equality before Marat; the Rights of Man before Siéyès; sacred insurrection before Mirabeau and Lafayette; the massacre of priests before the Septembrists."[2] But this is mere furious declamation. Only by heedless misreading or malice can support be given to the pretence that Diderot wrought for the violent overthrow of the existing political system. Passages denouncing kingly tyranny had been inserted in their plays by both Corneille and Voltaire, and applauded by audiences who never dreamt of abolishing monarchy. A phrase about strangling kings in the bowels of priests is expressly put by Diderot in the mouth of an *Éleuthéromane* or Liberty-maniac;[3] which shows that the type had arisen in his lifetime in opposition to his own bias. This very poem he read to

[1] Work cited, p. 358.

[2] *Id.* p. 359.

[3] Cp. Morley, *Diderot*, p. 407. Lord Morley points to the phrase in another form in a letter of Voltaire's in 1761. It really derives from Jean Meslier, who quotes it from an unlettered man (*Testament*, i, 19).

the Prince von Galitzin, the ambassador of the Empress Catherine and his own esteemed friend.[1] The tyranny of the French Government, swayed by the king's mistresses and favourites and by the Jesuits, he did indeed detest, as he had cause to do, and as every man of good feeling did with him; but no writing of his wrought measurably for its violent overthrow.[2] D'Argenson in 1751 was expressing his fears of a revolution, and noting the "désobeissance constante" of the Parlement of Paris and the disaffection of the people, before he had heard of "*un* M. Diderot, qui a beaucoup d'esprit, mais qui affecte trop l'irreligion." And when he notes that the Jesuits have secured the suppression of the *Encyclopédie* as being hostile "to God and the royal authority," he does not attach the slightest weight to the charge. He knew that Louis called the pious Jansenists "enemies of God and of the king."[3]

Mallet du Pan grounds his charge against Diderot almost solely on "those incendiary diatribes intercalated in the *Histoire philosophique des deux Indes* which dishonour that work, and which Raynal, in his latter days, excised with horror from a new edition which he was preparing." But supposing the passages in question to be all Diderot's[4]—which is far from certain—they are to be saddled with responsibility for the Reign of Terror only on the principle that it was more provocative in the days of tyranny to denounce than to exercise it. To this complexion Mallet du Pan came, with the anti-Revolutionists in general; but to-day we can recognize in the whole process of reasoning a *reductio ad absurdum*. The school in question came in all seriousness to ascribe the evils of the Revolution to everything and everybody save the men and classes whose misgovernment made the Revolution inevitable.

Some of the philosophers, it is true, themselves gave colour to the view that they were the makers of the Revolution, as when D'Alembert said to Romilly that "philosophy" had produced in his time that change in the popular mind which exhibited itself in the indifference with which they received the news of the birth of the dauphin.[5] The error is none the less plain. The *philosophes* had done nothing to promote anti-monarchism among the common people, who did not read.[6] It was the whole political and social

[1] Rosenkranz, *Diderot's Leben und Werke*, 1866, ii, 380–81.
[2] As Lord Morley points out, Henri Martin absolutely reverses the purport of a passage in order to convict Diderot of justifying regicide.
[3] *Mémoires*, ed. Jannet, iv, 44, 51, 68, 69, 74, 91, 93, 101, 103.
[4] Mallet du Pan says he saw the MS., and knew Diderot to have received 10,000 *livres tournois* for his additions. This statement is incredible. But Meister is explicit, in his *éloge*, as to Diderot having written for the book much that he thought nobody would sign, whereas Raynal was ready to sign anything.
[5] *Memoirs of Sir Samuel Romilly*, 3rd ed. 1841, i, 46.
[6] When D'Argenson writes in 1752 (*Mémoires*, éd. Jannet, iv, 103) that he hears "only

evolution of two generations that had wrought the change; and the people were still for the most part believing Catholics. Frederick the Great was probably within the mark when in 1769 he privately reminded the more optimistic philosophers that their entire French public did not number above 200,000 persons. The people of Paris, who played the chief part in precipitating the Revolution, were spontaneously mutinous and disorderly, but were certainly not in any considerable number unbelievers. "While Voltaire dechristianized a portion of polite society the people remained very pious, even at Paris. In 1766 Louis XV, so unpopular, was acclaimed because he knelt, on the Pont Neuf, before the Holy Sacrament."[1]

And this is the final answer to any pretence that the Revolution was the work of the school of d'Holbach. Bergier the priest, and Rivarol the conservative unbeliever, alike denied that d'Holbach's systematic writings had any wide public. Doubtless the same men were ready to eat their words for the satisfaction of vilifying an opponent. It has always been the way of orthodoxy to tell atheists alternately that they are an impotent handful and that they are the ruin of society. But by this time it ought to be a matter of elementary knowledge that a great political revolution can be wrought only by far-reaching political forces, whether or not these may concur with a propaganda of rationalism in religion.[2] If any "philosopher" so-called is to be credited with specially promoting the Revolution, it is either Rousseau, who is so often hailed latterly as the engineer of a religious reaction, and whose works, as has been repeatedly remarked, "contain much that is utterly and irreconcilably opposed" to the Revolution,[3] or Raynal, who was only anti-clerical, not anti-Christian, and who actually censured the revolutionary procedure. When he published his first edition he must be held to have acquiesced in its doctrine, whether it were from Diderot's pen or his own. Rousseau and Raynal were the two most popular writers of their day who dealt with social as apart from religious or philosophical issues, and to both is thus imputed a general subversiveness. But here too the charge rests upon a sociological fallacy. The Parlement of Paris, composed of rich bourgeois and aristocrats, many of them Jansenists, very few

philosophes say, as if convinced, that even anarchy would be better" than the existing misgovernment, he makes no suggestion that they teach this. And he declares for his own part that everything is drifting to ruin: "nulle réformation.....nulle amélioration. .....Tout tombe, par lambeaux."

[1] Aulard, *Hist. polit. de la révol.* p. 24.

[2] This is the sufficient comment on a perplexing page of Lord Morley's second monograph on Burke (pp. 110–11), which I have never been able to reconcile with the rest of his writing.

[3] Lecky, *Hist. of England in the Eighteenth Century*, small ed. vi, 263.

of them freethinkers, most of them ready to burn freethinking books, played a "subversive" part throughout the century, inasmuch as it so frequently resisted the king's will.[1] The stars in their courses fought against the old despotism. Rousseau was ultimately influential towards change because change was inevitable and essential, not because he was restless. The whole drift of things furthered his ideas, which at the outset won no great vogue. He was followed because he set forth what so many felt; and similarly Raynal was read because he chimed with a strengthening feeling. In direct contradiction to Mallet du Pan, Chamfort, a keener observer, wrote while the Revolution was still in action that "the priesthood was the first bulwark of absolute power, and Voltaire overthrew it. Without this decisive and indispensable first step nothing would have been done."[2] The same observer goes on to say that Rousseau's political works, and particularly the *Contrat Social*, "were fitted for few readers, and caused no alarm at court.....That theory was regarded as a hollow speculation which could have no further consequences than the enthusiasm for liberty and the contempt of royalty carried so far in the pieces of Corneille, and applauded at court by the most absolute of kings, Louis XIV. All that seemed to belong to another world, and to have no connection with ours; .....in a word, Voltaire above all has made the Revolution, because he has written for all; Rousseau above all has made the Constitution because he has written for the thinkers."[3] And so the changes may be rung for ever. The final philosophy of history cannot be reached by any such artificial selection of factors;[4] and the ethical problem equally evades such solutions. If we are to pass any ethico-political judgment whatever, it must be that the evils of the Revolution lie at the door not of the reformers, but of the men, the classes, and the institutions which first provoked and then resisted it.[5] To describe the former as the authors of the process is as intelligent as it was to charge upon Sokrates the decay of orthodox tradition in Athens, and to charge upon that the later downfall of the Athenian empire. The wisest men of the age, notably the great Turgot, sought a gradual transformation, a peaceful and harmless transition from unconstitutional to constitutional government.

[1] D'Argenson notes this repeatedly, though in one passage he praises the Parlement as having alone made head against absolutism (déc. 1752; ed. cited, iv, 116).

[2] *Maximes et Pensées*, ed. 1856, p. 72. [3] *Id.* pp. 73–74.

[4] Chamfort in another passage maintains against Soulavie that the *Academy* did much to develop the spirit of freedom in thought and politics. *Id.* p. 107. And this too is arguable, as we have seen.

[5] On this complicated issue, which cannot be here handled at any further length, see Prof. P. A. Wadia's essay *The Philosophers and the French Revolution* (Social Science Series, 1904), which, however, needs revision; and compare the argument of Nourrisson, *J.-J. Rousseau et le Rousseauisme*, 1903, ch. xx.

Their policy was furiously resisted by an unteachable aristocracy. When at last fortuitous violence made a breach in the feudal walls, a people unprepared for self-rule, and fought by an aristocracy eager for blood, surged into anarchy, and convulsion followed on convulsion. That is in brief the history of the Revolution.

31. While the true causation of the Revolution is thus kept clear, it must not be forgotten, further, that to the very last, save where controlled by disguised rationalists like Malesherbes, the tendency of the old régime was to persecute brutally and senselessly wherever it could lay hands on a freethinker. In 1788, only a year before the first explosion of the Revolution, there appeared the *Almanach des Honnêtes Gens* of SYLVAIN MARÉCHAL, a work of which the offence consisted not in any attack upon religion, but in simply constructing a calendar in which the names of renowned laymen were substituted for saints. Instantly it was denounced by the Paris Parlement, the printer prosecuted, and the author imprisoned; and De Sauvigny, the censor who had passed the book, was exiled thirty leagues from Paris.[1]

> Some idea of the intensity of the tyranny over all literature in France under the Old Régime may be gathered from Buckle's compendious account of the books officially condemned, and of authors punished, during the two generations before the Revolution. Apart from the record of the treatment of Buffon, Marmontel, Morellet, Voltaire, and Diderot, it runs: "The..... tendency was shown in matters so trifling that nothing but the gravity of their ultimate results prevents them from being ridiculous. In 1770, Imbert translated Clarke's *Letters on Spain*, one of the best works then existing on that country. This book, however, was suppressed as soon as it appeared; and the only reason assigned for such a stretch of power is that it contained some remarks respecting the passion of Charles III for hunting, which were considered disrespectful to the French crown, because Louis XV himself was a great hunter. Several years before this La Bletterie, who was favourably known in France by his works, was elected a member of the French Academy. But he, it seems, was a Jansenist, and had moreover ventured to assert that the Emperor Julian, notwithstanding his apostasy, was not entirely devoid of good qualities. Such offences could not be overlooked in so pure an age; and the king obliged the Academy to exclude La Bletterie from their society. That the punishment extended no further was an instance of remarkable leniency; for Fréret, an eminent critic and scholar, was confined in the Bastille because he stated,

[1] *Correspondance de Grimm*, ed. cited, xiv, 5–6. Lettre de janv. 1788.

in one of his memoirs, that the earliest Frankish chiefs had received their titles from the Romans. The same penalty was inflicted four different times upon Lenglet du Fresnoy. In the case of this amiable and accomplished man, there seems to have been hardly the shadow of a pretext for the cruelty with which he was treated; though on one occasion the alleged offence was that he had published a supplement to the History of De Thou.

"Indeed, we have only to open the biographies and correspondence of that time to find instances crowding upon us from all quarters. Rousseau was threatened with imprisonment, was driven from France, and his works were publicly burned. The celebrated treatise of Helvétius on the Mind was suppressed by an order of the Royal Council; it was burned by the common hangman, and the author was compelled to write two letters retracting his opinions. Some of the geological views of Buffon having offended the clergy, that illustrious naturalist was obliged to publish a formal recantation of doctrines which are now known to be perfectly accurate. The learned *Observations on the History of France*, by Mably, were suppressed as soon as they appeared: for what reason it would be hard to say, since M. Guizot, certainly no friend either to anarchy or to irreligion, has thought it worth while to republish them, and thus stamp them with the authority of his own great name. *The History of the Indies*, by Raynal, was condemned to the flames, and the author ordered to be arrested. Lanjuinais, in his well-known work on Joseph II, advocated not only religious toleration, but even the abolition of slavery; his book, therefore, was declared to be 'seditious'; it was pronounced 'destructive of all subordination,' and was sentenced to be burned. The *Analysis of Bayle*, by Marsy, was suppressed, and the author was imprisoned. The *History of the Jesuits*, by Linguet, was delivered to the flames; eight years later his journal was suppressed; and, three years after that, as he still persisted in writing, his *Political Annals* were suppressed, and he himself was thrown into the Bastille. Delisle de Sales was sentenced to perpetual exile and confiscation of all his property on account of his work on the *Philosophy of Nature*. The treatise by Mey, on French Law, was suppressed; that by Boncerf, on Feudal Law, was burned. *The Memoirs of Beaumarchais* were likewise burned; the *Éloge on Fénelon*, by La Harpe, was merely suppressed. Duvernet, having written a *History of the Sorbonne*, which was still unpublished, was seized and thrown into the Bastille, while the manuscript was yet in his own possession. The celebrated work of De Lolme on the English constitution was suppressed by edict directly it appeared. The fate of being suppressed or prohibited also awaited the Letters of Gervaise in 1724; the Dissertations of Courayer in 1727; the Letters of Montgon in 1732; the *History of Tamerlane*, by Margat, also in 1732; the

Essay on Taste, by Cartaud, in 1736; The *Life of Domat*, by Prévost de la Jannès, in 1742; the *History of Louis XI*, by Duclos, in 1745; the Letters of Bargeton in 1750; the *Memoirs on Troyes*, by Grosley, in the same year; the *History of Clement XI*, by Reboulet, in 1752; The *School of Man*, by Génard, also in 1752; the *Therapeutics* of Garlon in 1756; the celebrated thesis of Louis, on *Generation*, in 1754; the treatise on *Presidial Jurisdiction*, by Jousse, in 1755; the *Ericie* of Fontenelle in 1768; the *Thoughts of Jamin* in 1769; the *History of Siam*, by Turpin, and the *Éloge of Marcus Aurelius*, by Thomas, both in 1770; the works on Finance by Darigrand, in 1764, and by Le Trosne in 1779; the *Essay on Military Tactics*, by Guibert, in 1772; the Letters of Boucquet in the same year; and the *Memoirs of Terrai*, by Coquereau, in 1776. Such wanton destruction of property was, however, mercy itself compared to the treatment experienced by other literary men in France. Desforges, for example, having written against the arrest of the Pretender to the English throne, was, solely on that account, buried in a dungeon eight feet square and confined there for three years. This happened in 1749; and in 1770, Audra, professor at the College of Toulouse, and a man of some reputation, published the first volume of his *Abridgement of General History*. Beyond this the work never proceeded; it was at once condemned by the archbishop of the diocese, and the author was deprived of his office. Audra, held up to public opprobrium, the whole of his labours rendered useless, and the prospects of his life suddenly blighted, was unable to survive the shock. He was struck with apoplexy, and within twenty-four hours was lying a corpse in his own house."

32. Among many other illustrations of the passion for persecution in the period may be noted the fact that after the death of the atheist Damilaville his enemies contrived to deprive his brother of a post from which he had his sole livelihood.[1] It is but one of an infinity of proofs that the spirit of sheer sectarian malevolence, which is far from being eliminated in modern life, was in the French Church of the eighteenth century the ruling passion. Lovers of moderate courses there were, even in the Church; but even among professors of lenity we find an ingrained belief in the virtue of vituperation and coercion. And it is not until the persecuted minority has developed its power of written retaliation, and the deadly arrows of Voltaire have aroused in the minds of persecutors a new terror, that there seems to arise on that side a suspicion that there can be any better way of handling unbelief than by invective and imprisonment. After they had taught the heretics to defend themselves, and

[1] Lettre de Voltaire à D'Alembert, 27 août, 1774.

found them possessed of weapons such as orthodoxy could not hope to handle, we find Churchmen talking newly of the duty of gentleness towards error; and even then clinging to the last to the weapons of public ostracism and aspersion. So the fight was of necessity fought on the side of freethought in the temper of men warring on incorrigible oppression and cruelty as well as on error. The wonder is that the freethinkers preserved so much amenity.

33. This section would not be complete even in outline without some notice of the attitude held towards religion by Napoleon, who at once crowned and in large measure undid the work of the Revolution. He has his place in its religious legend in the current datum that he wrought for the faith by restoring a suppressed public worship and enabling the people of France once more to hear church-bells. In point of fact, as was pointed out by Bishop Grégoire in 1826, "it is materially proved that in 1796, before he was Consul, and four years before the Concordat, according to a statement drawn up at the office of the Domaines Nationaux, there were in France 32,214 parishes where the culte was carried on."[1] Other commonplaces concerning Napoleon are not much better founded. On the strength of a number of oral utterances, many of them imperfectly vouched for, and none of them marked by much deliberation, he has been claimed by Carlyle[2] as a theist who philosophically disdained the "clatter of materialism," and believed in a Personal Creator of an infinite universe; while by others he is put forward as a kind of expert in character study who vouched for the divinity of Jesus.[3] In effect, his verdict that "this was not a man" would tell, if anything, in favour of the view that Jesus is a mythical construction. He was, indeed, by temperament quasi-religious, liking the sound of church bells and the atmosphere of devotion; and in his boyhood he had been a rather fervent Catholic. As he grew up he read, like his contemporaries, the French deists of his time, and became a deist like his fellows, recognizing that religions were human productions. Declaring that he was "loin d'être athée," he propounded to O'Meara all the conventional views—that religion should be made a support to morals and law; that men need to believe in marvels; that religion is a great consolation to those who believe in it; and that "no one

[1] *Histoire du mariage des prêtres en France*, par. M. Grégoire, ancien évêque de Blois, 1826, p. v. Compare the details in the *Appendice* to the *Etudes* of M. Gazier, before cited. That writer's account is the more decisive seeing that his bias is clerical, and that, writing before M. Aulard, he had to a considerable extent retained the old illusion as to the "decreeing of atheism" by the Convention (p. 313). See pp. 230–260 as to the readjustment effected by Grégoire, while the conservative clergy were still striving to undo the Revolution.

[2] *Heroes and Hero-Worship: Napoleon.*

[3] See the *Sentiments de Napoléon sur le Christianisme: conversations recueillies à Sainte-Hélène par le Comte de Montholon*, 1841. Many of the utterances here set forth are irreconcilable with Napoleon's general tone.

can tell what he will do in his last moments."[1] The opinion to which he seems to have adhered most steadily was that every man should die in the religion in which he had been brought up. And he himself officially did so, though he put off almost to the last the formality of a deathbed profession. His language on the subject is irreconcilable with any real belief in the Christian religion: he was "a deist *à la* Voltaire who recalled with tenderness his Catholic childhood, and who at death reverted to his first beliefs."[2] For the rest, he certainly believed in religion as a part of the machinery of the State, and repeated the usual platitudes about its value as a moral restraint. He was candid enough, however, not to pretend that it had ever restrained him; and no freethinker condemned more sweepingly than he the paralysing effect of the Catholic system on Spain.[3] To the Church his attitude was purely political; and his personal liking for the Pope never moved him to yield, where he could avoid it, to the temporal pretensions of the papacy. The Concordat of 1802, that "brilliant triumph over the genius of the Revolution,"[4] was purely and simply a political measure. If he had had his way, he would have set up a system of religious councils in France, to be utilized against all disturbing tendencies in politics.[5] Had he succeeded, he was capable of suppressing all manifestations of freethought in the interests of "order."[6] He had, in fact, no disinterested love of truth; and we have his express declaration, at St. Helena, on the subject of Molière's *Tartufe*: "I do not hesitate to say that if the piece had been written in my time, I would not have permitted its representation."[7] Freethought can make no warm claim to the allegiance of such a ruler; and if the Church of Rome is concerned to claim him as a son on the score of his deathbed adherence, after a reign which led the Catholic clergy of Spain to hold him up to the faithful as an incarnation of the devil,[8] she will hardly gain by the association. Napoleon's ideas on religious questions were in fact no more noteworthy than his views on economics, which were thoroughly conventional.

[1] O'Meara, *Napoléon en Exil*, ed. Lacroix, 1897, ii, 39.
[2] Ph. Gonnard, *Les origines de la légende Napoléonienne*, 1906, p. 258. [3] *Id.* p. 260.
[4] Pasquier, cited by Rose, *Life of Napoleon*, ed. 1913, i, 282. The Concordat was bitterly resented by the freethinkers in the army. *Id.* p. 281.
[5] See Jules Barni's *Napoléon Ier*, ed. 1870, p. 83, as to the amazing Catechism imposed by Napoleon on France in 1811. For the history of its preparation and imposition see De Labone, *Paris sous Napoléon: La Religion*, 1907, p. 100 *sq.*
[6] As to the Napoleonic censorship of literature, cp. Madame de Staël, *Considérations sur la révolution française*, ptie. iv, ch. 16; *Dix Années d'Exil*, préf.; Welschinger, *La Censure sous le premier Empire*, 1882.
[7] Las Cases, *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*, 19 août, 1816.
[8] Mignet, *Hist. de la révolution française*, 4e édit. ii, 340.

Chapter XVIII

GERMAN FREETHOUGHT IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

1. When two generations of Protestant strife had turned to naught the intellectual promise of the Reformation, and much of the ground first won by it had lapsed to Catholicism, the general forward movement of European thought availed to set up in Germany as elsewhere a measure of critical unbelief. There is abundant evidence that the Lutheran clergy not only failed to hold the best intelligence of the country with them, but in large part fell into personal disrepute.[1] "The scenes of clerical immorality," says an eminently orthodox historian, "are enough to chill one's blood even at the distance of two centuries."[2] A Church Ordinance of 1600 acknowledges information to the effect that a number of clergymen and schoolmasters are guilty of "whoredom and fornication," and commands that "if they are *notoriously* guilty they shall be suspended." Details are preserved of cases of clerical drunkenness and ruffianism; and the women of the priests' families do not escape the pillory.[3] Nearly a century later, Arnold resigned his professorship at Giessen "from despair of producing any amendment in the dissolute habits of the students."[4] It is noted that "the great moral decline of the clergy was confined chiefly to the Lutheran Church. The Reformed [Calvinistic] was earnest, pious, and aggressive"[5]—the usual result of official hostility.

In such circumstances, the active freethought existing in France at the beginning of the seventeenth century could not fail to affect Germany; and even before the date of the polemic of Garasse and Mersenne there appeared (1615) a counterblast to the new thought in the *Theologia Naturalis* of J. H. Alsted, of Frankfort, directed *adversus atheos, Epicureos, et sophistas hujus temporis*. The preface to this solid quarto (a remarkable sample of good printing for the period) declares that "there are men in this diseased (*exulcerato*)

[1] Cp. Pusey, *Histor. Enquiry into the Probable Causes of the Rationalist Character of the Theology of Germany*, 1828, p. 79.
[2] Bishop Hurst, *History of Rationalism*, ed. 1867, p. 56.
[3] *Id.* pp. 57–58 (last ed. pp. 74–76), citing Tholuck, *Deutsche Universitäten*, i, 145–48, and Dowding, *Life of Calixtus*, pp. 132–33. [4] Pusey, p. 113. [5] Hurst, p. 59.

age who dare to oppose science to revelation, reason to faith, nature to grace, the creator to the redeemer, and truth to truth"; and the writer undertakes to rise argumentatively from nature to the Christian God, without, however, transcending the logical plane of De Mornay. The trouble of the time, unhappily for the faith, was not rationalism, but the inextinguishable hatreds of Protestant and Catholic, and the strife of economic interests dating from the appropriations of the first reformers. At length, after a generation of gloomy suspense, came the explosion of the hostile ecclesiastical interests, and the long-drawn horror of the Thirty Years' War, which left Germany mangled, devastated, drained of blood and treasure, decivilized, and well-nigh destitute of the machinery of culture. No such printing as that of Alsted's book was to be done in the German world for many generations. But as in France, so in Germany, the exhausting experience of the moral and physical evil of religious war wrought something of an antidote, in the shape of a new spirit of rationalism.

Not only was the Peace of Westphalia an essentially secular arrangement, subordinating all religious claims to a political settlement,[1] but the drift of opinion was markedly freethinking. Already in 1630 one writer describes "three classes of skeptics among the nobility of Hamburg: first, those who believe that religion is nothing but a mere fiction, invented to keep the masses in restraint; second, those who give preference to no faith, but think that all religions have a germ of truth; and third, those who, confessing that there must be one true religion, are unable to decide whether it is papal, Calvinist, or Lutheran, and consequently believe nothing at all." No less explicit is the written testimony of Walther, the court chaplain of Ulrich II of East Friesland, 1637: "These infernal courtiers, among whom I am compelled to live against my will, doubt those truths which even the heathen have learned to believe."[2] In Germany as in France the freethinking which thus grew up during the religious war expanded after the peace. As usual, this is to be gathered from the orthodox propaganda against it, setting out in 1662 with a *Preservative against the Pest of Present-day Atheists*,[3] by one Theophilus Gegenbauer. So far was this from attaining its end that there ensued ere long a more positive and aggressive development of freethinking than any other country had yet seen. A wandering

[1] Cp. Buckle, 1-vol. ed. pp. 308–309. "The result of the Thirty Years' War was indifference, not only to the Confession, but to religion in general. Ever since that period, secular interests decidedly occupythe foreground" (Kahnis, *Internal History of German Protestantism*, Eng. tr. 1856, p. 21).

[2] Quoted by Bishop Hurst, ed. cited, p. 60 (78).

[3] *Preservatio wider die Pest der heutigen Atheisten.*

scholar, MATTHIAS KNUTZEN of Holstein (b. 1645), who had studied philosophy at Königsberg, went about in 1674 teaching a hardy Religion of Humanity, rejecting alike immortality, God and Devil, churches and priests, and insisting that conscience could perfectly well take the place of the Bible as a guide to conduct. His doctrines are to be gathered chiefly from a curious Latin letter,[1] written by him for circulation, headed *Amicus Amicis Amica;* and in this the profession of atheism is explicit: "*Insuper Deum negamus.*" In two dialogues in German he set forth the same ideas. His followers, as holding by conscience, were called *Gewissener;* and he or another of his group asserted that in Jena alone there were seven hundred of them.[2] The figures were fantastic, and the whole movement passed rapidly out of sight—hardly by reason of the orthodox refutations, however. Germany was in no state to sustain such a party; and what happened was a necessarily slow gestation of the seed of new thought thus cast abroad.

Knutzen's Latin letter is given in full by a Welsh scholar settled in Germany, Jenkinus Thomasius (Jenkin Thomas), in his *Historia Atheismi* (Altdorf, 1692), ed. Basel, 1709, pp. 97–101; also by La Croze in his (anon.) *Entretiens sur divers sujets*, 1711, p. 402 *sq.* Thomasius thus codifies its doctrine:—"1. There is neither God nor Devil. 2. The magistrate is nothing to be esteemed; temples are to be condemned, priests to be rejected. 3. In place of the magistrate and the priest are to be put knowledge and reason, joined with conscience, which teaches to live honestly, to injure none, and to give each his own. 4. Marriage and free union do not differ. 5. This is the only life: after it, there is neither reward nor punishment. 6. The Scripture contradicts itself." Knutzen admittedly wrote like a scholar (Thomasius, p. 97); but his treatment of Scripture contradictions belongs to the infancy of criticism; though La Croze, replying thirty years later, could only meet it with charges of impiety and stupidity. As to the numbers of the movement see Trinius, *Freydenker Lexicon*, 1759, s. v. KNUTZEN. Kurtz (*Hist. of the Christian Church*, Eng. tr. 1864, i, 213) states that a careful academic investigation proved the claim to a membership of 700 to be an empty boast (citing H. Rossel, *Studien und Kritiken*, 1844, iv). This doubtless refers to the treatise of Musæus, Jena, 1675, cited by La Croze, p. 401. Some converts Knutzen certainly made; and as only the hardiest would dare to avow themselves, his influence may have been considerable. "Examples of total unbelief come only singly to knowledge," says Tholuck; "but total unbelief had still to the end of the

[1] Dated from Rome; but this was a mystification.
[2] Kahnis, p. 125; La Croze, *Entretiens*, 1711, p. 401.

century to bear penal treatment." He gives the instances (1) of the Swedish Baron Skytte, reported in 1669 by Spener to the Frankfort authorities for having said at table, before the court preacher, that the Scriptures were not holy, and not from God but from men; and (2) "a certain minister" who at the end of the century was prosecuted for blasphemy. (*Das kirchliche Leben des 17ten Jahrhunderts*, 2 Abth. pp. 56–57.) Even Anabaptists were still liable to banishment in the middle of the century. *Id.* 1 Abth. 1861, p. 36. As to clerical intolerance see pp. 40–44. On the merits of the Knutzen movement cp. Pünjer, *Hist. of the Christian Philos. of Religion*, Eng. tr. i, 437–8.

2. While, however, clerical action could drive such a movement under the surface, it could not prevent the spread of rationalism in all directions; and there was now germinating a philosophic unbelief[1] under the influence of Spinoza. Nowhere were there more prompt and numerous answers to Spinoza than in Germany,[2] whence it may be inferred that within the educated class he soon had a good many adherents. In point of fact the Elector Palatine offered him a professorship of philosophy at Heidelberg in 1673, promising him "the most ample freedom in philosophical teaching," and merely stipulating that he should not use it "to disturb the religion publicly established."[3] On the other hand, Professor Rappolt, of Leipzig, attacked him as an atheist, in an *Oratio contra naturalistas* in 1670; Professor Musæus, of Jena, assailed him in 1674;[4] and the Chancellor Kortholt, of Kiel, grouped him, Herbert, and Hobbes as *The Three Great Impostors* in 1680.[5] After the appearance of the *Ethica* the replies multiplied. On the other hand, Cuffelaer vindicated Spinoza in 1684; and in 1691 F. W. Stosch, a court official, and son of the court preacher, published a stringent attack on revelationism, entitled *Concordia rationis et fidei*, partly on Spinozistic lines, which created much commotion, and was forcibly suppressed and condemned to be burnt by the hangman at Berlin,[6] as it denied not only the immateriality but the immortality of the soul and the historical truth of the Scriptural narratives. This seems to have been the first work of modern freethought published by a German,[7] apart from Knutzen's letter; but a partial list of the apologetic works

[1] Even Knutzen seems to have been influenced by Spinoza. Pünjer, *Hist. of the Christ. Philos. of Religion*, Eng. tr. i. 437. Pünjer, however, seems to have exaggerated the connection.

[2] Cp. Lange, *Gesch. des Materialismus*, 3te Aufl. i, 318 (Eng. tr. ii, 35).

[3] *Epistolæ ad Spinozam et Responsiones*, in Gfrörer, liii.

[4] Colerus, *Vie de Spinoza*, in Gfrörer's ed. of the *Opera*, 1830, pp. lv, lvi.

[5] Pünjer, as cited, i, 434-36; Lange, last cit. Lange notes that Genthe's *Compendium de impostura religionum*, which has been erroneously assigned to the sixteenth century, must belong to the period of Kortholt's work.

[6] Pünjer, p. 439; Lange, last cit.; Tholuck, *Kirch. Leben*, 2 Abth. pp. 57–58.

[7] It was nominally issued at Amsterdam, really at Berlin.

of the period, from Gegenbauer onwards, may suffice to suggest the real vogue of heterodox opinions:—

1662. Th. Gegenbauer. *Preservatio wider die Pest der heutigen Atheisten.* Erfurt.
1668. J. Musæus. *Examen Cherburianismi. Contra E. Herbertum de Cherbury.*
,, Anton Reiser. *De origine, progressu, et incremento Antitheismi seu Atheismi.*[1] Augsburg.
1670. Rappolt. *Oratio contra Naturalistas.* Leipzig.
1672. J. Müller. *Atheismus devictus* (in German). Hamburg.
,, J. Lassen. *Arcana-Politica-Atheistica* (in German).
1673. —— *Besiegte Atheisterey.*
,, Chr. Pfaff. *Disputatio contra Atheistas.*
1674. J. Musæus. *Spinozismus.* Jena.
1677. Val. Greissing. *Corona Transylvani; Exerc. 2, de Atheismo, contra Cartesium et Math. Knutzen.* Wittemberg.
,, Tobias Wagner. *Examen.....atheismi speculativi.* Tübingen.
,, K. Rudrauff, Giessen. *Dissertatio de Atheismo.*
1680. Chr. Kortholt. *De tribus impostoribus magnis liber.* Kiloni.
1689. Th. Undereyck. *Der Närrische Atheist in seiner Thorheit ueberzeugt.* Bremen.
1692. Jenkinus Thomasius. *Historia Atheismi.* Altdorf.
1696. J. Lassen. *Arcana-Politica-Atheistica.* Reprint.
1697. A. H. Grosse. *An Atheismus necessario ducat ad corruptionem morum.* Rostock.
,, Em. Weber. *Beurtheilung der Atheisterei.*
1700. Tribbechov. *Historia Naturalismi.* Jena.
1708. Loescher. *Prænotiones Theologicæ contra Naturalistarum et Fanaticorum omne genus, Atheos, Deistas, Indifferentistas,* etc. Wittemberg.
,, Schwartz. *Demonstrationes Dei.* Leipzig.
,, Rechenberg. *Fundamenta veræ religionis Prudentum, adversus Atheos,* etc.
1710. J. C. Wolfius. *Dissertatio de Atheismi falso suspectis.* Wittemberg.
1713. J. N. Fromman. *Atheus Stultus.* Tübingen.
,, Anon. *Widerlegung der Atheisten, Deisten, und neuen Zweifeler.* Frankfort.

[Later came the works of Buddeus (1716) and Reimmann and Fabricius, noted above, vol. i, ch. i, § 2.]

3. For a community in which the reading class was mainly clerical and scholastic, the seeds of rationalism were thus in part sown in the seventeenth century; but the ground was not yet propitious. LEIBNITZ (1646–1716), the chief thinker produced by Germany before Kant, lived in a state of singular intellectual isolation;[2] and showed his sense of it by writing his philosophic treatises chiefly in French. One of the most widely learned men of his age, he was wont from his boyhood to grapple critically with every system of thought that came in his way; and, while claiming to be

[1] This writer gives (p. 12) a notable list of the forms of atheism: *Atheismus directus, indirectus, formalis, virtualis, theoreticus, practicus, inchoatus, consummatus, subtilis, crassus, privativus, negativus,* and so on, *ad lib.*
[2] Cp. *Buckle and his Critics,* pp. 171-72; Pünjer, i. 515.

always eager to learn,[1] he was as a rule strongly concerned to affirm his own powerful bias. Early in life he writes that it horrifies him to think how many men he has met who were at once intelligent and atheistic;[2] and his propaganda is always dominated by the desire rather to confute unbelief than to find out the truth. As early as 1668 (aet. 22) he wrote an essay to that end, which was published as a *Confessio naturæ contra Atheistas*. Against Spinoza he reacted instantly and violently, pronouncing the *Tractatus* on its first (anonymous) appearance an "unbearably bold (*licentiosum*) book," and resenting the Hobbesian criticism which it "dared to apply to sacred Scripture."[3] Yet in the next year we find him writing to Arnauld in earnest protest against the hidebound orthodoxy of the Church. "A philosophic age," he declares, "is about to begin, in which the concern for truth, flourishing outside the schools, will spread even among politicians. Nothing is more likely to strengthen atheism and to upset faith, already so shaken by the attacks of great but bad men [a pleasing allusion to Spinoza], than to see on the one side the mysteries of the faith preached upon as the creed of all, and on the other hand become matter of derision to all, convicted of absurdity by the most certain rules of common reason. The worst enemies of the Church are in the Church. Let us take care lest the latest heresy—I will not say atheism, but—naturalism, be publicly professed."[4] For a time he seemed thus disposed to liberalize. He wrote to Spinoza on points of optics before he discovered the authorship; and he is represented later as speaking of the *Tractatus* with respect. He even visited Spinoza in 1676, and obtained a perusal of the manuscript of the *Ethica;* but he remained hostile to him in theology and philosophy. To the last he called Spinoza a mere developer of Descartes,[5] whom he also habitually resisted.

This was not hopeful; and Leibnitz, with all his power and originality, really wrought little for the direct rationalization of religious thought.[6] His philosophy, with all its ingenuity, has the common stamp of the determination of the theist to find reasons for the God in whom he believed beforehand; and his principle that all is for the best is the fatal rounding of his argumentative circle. Thus his doctrine that that is true which is clear was turned to the

[1] Letter cited by Dr. Latta. *Leibniz*, 1898, p. 2, *note*.
[2] *Philos. Schriften*, ed. Gerhardt, i, 26; Martineau, *Study of Spinoza*, p. 77.
[3] Letter to Thomas, December 23, 1670.
[4] Quoted by Tholuck, as last cited, p. 61. Spener took the same tone.
[5] *Philos. Schriften*, ed. Gerhardt, i, 34; ii, 563; Latta, p. 24; Martineau, p. 75. Cp. *Refutation of Spinoza by Leibnitz*, ed. by Foucher de Careil, Eng. tr. 1855.
[6] His notable surmise as to gradation of species (see Latta, pp. 38-39) was taken up among the French materialists, but did not then modify current science.

account of an empiricism of which the "clearness" was really predetermined by the conviction of truth. His *Theodicée*,[1] written in reply to Bayle, is by the admission even of admirers[2] a process of begging the question. Deity, a mere "infinition" of finite qualities, is proved à priori, though it is expressly argued that a finite mind cannot grasp infinity; and the necessary goodness of necessary deity is posited in the same fashion. It is very significant that such a philosopher, himself much given to denying the religiousness of other men's theories, was nevertheless accused among both the educated and the populace of being essentially non-religious. Nominally he adhered to the entire Christian system, including miracles, though he declared that his belief in dogma rested on the agreement of reason with faith, and claimed to keep his thought free on unassailed truths;[3] and he always discussed the Bible as a believer; yet he rarely went to church;[4] and the Low German nickname *Lövenix* (= *Glaubet nichts*, "believes nothing") expressed his local reputation. No clergyman attended his funeral; but indeed no one else went, save his secretary.[5] It is on the whole difficult to doubt that his indirect influence not only in Germany but elsewhere had been and has been for deism and atheism.[6] He and Newton were the most distinguished mathematicians and theists of the age; and Leibnitz, as we saw, busied himself to show that the philosophy of Newton[7] tended to atheism, and that that of their theistic predecessor Descartes would not stand criticism.[8] Spinoza being, according to him, in still worse case, and Locke hardly any sounder,[9] there remained for theists only his cosmology of monads and his ethic of optimism—all for the best in the best of all possible worlds—which seems at least as well fitted as any other theism to make thoughtful men give up the principle.

4. Other culture-conditions concurred to set up a spirit of rationalism in Germany. After the Thirty Years' War there arose a religious movement, called *Pietism* by its theological opponents, which aimed at an emotional inwardness of religious

[1] The only lengthy treatise published by him in his lifetime.
[2] M. A. Jacques, intr. to *Œuvres de Leibnitz*, 1846, i, 54–57.
[3] Cp. Tholuck, *Das kirchliche Leben*, as cited, 2 Abth. pp. 52–55. Kahnis, coinciding with Erdmann, pronounces that, although Leibnitz "acknowledges the God of the Christian faith, yet his system assigned to Him a very uncertain position only" (*Int. Hist. of Ger. Protestantism*, p. 26).
[4] Cp. Pünjer, i, 509, as to his attitude on ritual.
[5] Latta, as cited, p. 16; *Vie de Leibnitz*, par De Jaucourt, in ed. 1747 of the *Essais de Théodicée*, i, 235–39.
[6] As to his virtual deism see Pünjer, i, 513–15. But he proposed to send Christian missionaries to the heathen. Tholuck, as last cited, p. 55.
[7] *Lettres entre Leibnitz et Clarke.*
[8] *Discours de la conformité de la foi avec la raison*, §§ 68–70; *Essais sur la bonté de Dieu*, etc., §§ 50, 61, 164, 180, 292–93.
[9] The *Nouveaux Essais sur l'Entendement humain*, refuting Locke, appeared posthumously in 1765. Locke had treated his theistic critic with contempt. (Latta, p. 13.)

life as against what its adherents held to be an irreligious orthodoxy around them.[1] Contending against rigid articles of credence, they inevitably prepared the way for less credent forms of thought.[2] Though the first leaders of Pietism grew embittered with their unsuccess and the attacks of their religious enemies,[3] their impulse went far, and greatly influenced the clergy through the university of Halle, which in the first part of the eighteenth century turned out 6,000 clergymen in one generation.[4] Against the Pietists were furiously arrayed the Lutherans of the old order, who even contrived in many places to suppress their schools.[5] Virtues generated under persecution, however, underwent the law of degeneration which dogs all intellectual subjection; and the inner life of Pietism, lacking mental freedom and intellectual play, grew as cramped in its emotionalism as that of orthodoxy in its dogmatism. Religion was thus represented by a species of extremely unattractive and frequently absurd formalists on the one hand, and on the other by a school which at its best unsettled religious usage, and otherwise tended alternately to fanaticism and cant.[6] Thus "the rationalist tendencies of the age were promoted by this treble exhibition of the aberrations of belief."[7] "How sorely," says Tholuck, "the hold not only of ecclesiastical but of Biblical belief on men of all grades had been shaken at the beginning of the eighteenth century is seen in many instances."[8] Orthodoxy selects that of a Holstein student who hanged himself at Wittemberg in 1688, leaving written in his New Testament, in Latin, the declaration that "Our soul is mortal; religion is a popular delusion, invented to gull the ignorant, and so govern the world the better."[9] But again there is the testimony of the mint-master at Hanover that at court there all lived as "free atheists." And though the name "freethinker" was not yet much used in discussion, it had become current in the form of *Freigeist*—the German equivalent still used. This, as we have noted,[10] was probably a survival from the name of the old sect of the "Free Spirit," rather than an adaptation from the French *esprit fort* or the English "freethinker."

[1] Amand Saintes, *Hist. crit. du Rationalisme en Allemagne*, 1841, ch. vi; Heinrich Schmid, *Die Geschichte des Pietismus*, 1863, ch. ii.

[2] Saintes, p. 51; cp. Pusey, p. 105, as to "the want of resistance from the school of Pietists to the subsequent invasion of unbelief."

[3] Hagenbach, *German Rationalism*, Eng. tr. 1865, p. 9.

[4] *Id.* p. 39; Pusey, *Histor. Enquiry into the Causes of German Rationalism*, 1828, pp. 88, 97; Tholuck, *Abriss einer Geschichte des Umwälzung.....seit 1750 auf dem Gebiete der Theologie in Deutschland*, in *Vermischte Schriften*, 1839, ii, 5.

[5] Pusey, pp. 86, 87, 98.

[6] Cp. Pusey, pp. 37–38, 45, 48, 49, 53–54, 79, 101–109; Saintes, pp. 28, 79–80; Hagenbach, pp. 41, 72, 105.

[7] Pusey, p. 110. Cp. Saintes, ch. vi.

[8] *Das kirchliche Leben*, as cited, 2 Abth. p. 58.

[9] *Id.* pp. 56–57.

[10] Vol. i, p. 6.

5. After the collapse of the popular movement of Matthias Knutzen, the thin end of the new wedge may be seen in the manifold work of CHRISTIAN THOMASIUS (1655–1728), who in 1687 published a treatise on "Divine Jurisprudence," in which the principles of Pufendorf on natural law, already offensive to the theologians, were carried so far as to give new offence. Reading Pufendorf in his nonage as a student of jurisprudence, he was so conscious of the conflict between the utilitarian and the Scriptural view of moral law that, taught by a master who had denounced Pufendorf, he recoiled in a state of theological fear.[1] Some years later, gaining self-possession, he recognized the rationality of Pufendorf's system, and both expounded and defended him, thus earning his share in the hostility which the great jurist encountered at clerical hands. Between that hostility and the naturalist bias which he had acquired from Pufendorf, there grew up in him an aversion to the methods and pretensions of theologians which made him their lifelong antagonist.[2] Pufendorf had but guardedly introduced some of the fundamental principles of Hobbes, relating morals to the social state, and thus preparing the way for utilitarianism.[3] This sufficed to make the theologians his enemies; and it is significant that Thomasius, heterodox at the outset only thus far forth, becomes from that point onwards an important pioneer of freethought, toleration, and humane reform. Innovating in all things, he began, while still a *Privatdocent* at Leipzig University, a campaign on behalf of the German language; and, not content with arousing much pedantic enmity by delivering lectures for the first time in his mother tongue, and deriding at the same time the bad scholastic Latin of his compatriots, he set on foot the first vernacular German periodical,[4] which ran for two years (1688–90), and caused so much anger that he was twice prosecuted before the ecclesiastical court of Dresden, the second time on a charge of contempt of religion. The periodical was in effect a crusade against all the pedantries, the theologians coming in for the hardest blows.[5] Other satirical writings, and a

[1] H. Luden, *Christian Thomasius nach seinen Schicksalen und Schriften dargestellt*, 1805, p. 7. [2] Cp. Schmid, *Geschichte des Pietismus*, pp. 486–88.

[3] Pufendorf's bulky treatise *De Jure Naturæ et Gentium* was published at Lund, where he was professor, in 1672. The shorter *De Officio hominis et civis* (also Lund, 1673) is a condensation and partly a vindication of the other, and this it was that convinced Thomasius. As to Pufendorf's part in the transition from theological to rational moral philosophy, see Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, iv, 171–78. He is fairly to be bracketed with Cumberland; but Hallam hardly recognizes that it was the challenge of Hobbes that forced the change.

[4] *Freimüthige, lustige und ernsthafte, jedoch vernunft- und gesetzmässige Gedanken, oder Monatgespräche über allerhand, vornehmlich über neue Bücher.* There had been an earlier *Acta Eruditorum*, in Latin, published at Leipzig, and a French *Ephemerides savantes*, Hamburg, 1686. Other German and French periodicals soon followed that of Thomasius. Luden, p. 162.

[5] Schmid, pp. 488–92, gives a sketch of some of the contents.

defence of intermarriage between Calvinists and Lutherans,[1] at length put him in such danger that, to escape imprisonment, he sought the protection of the Elector of Brandenburg at Halle, where he ultimately became professor of jurisprudence in the new university, founded by his advice. There for a time he leant towards the Pietists, finding in that body a concern for natural liberty of feeling and thinking which was absent from the mental life of orthodoxy; but he was "of another spirit" than they, and took his own way.

In philosophy an unsystematic pantheist, he taught, after Plutarch, Bayle, and Bacon, that "superstition is worse than atheism"; but his great practical service to German civilization, over and above his furthering of the native speech, was his vigorous polemic against prosecutions for heresy, trials for witchcraft, and the use of torture, all of which he did more than any other German to discredit, though judicial torture subsisted for another half-century.[2] It was by his propaganda that the princes of Germany were moved to abolish all trials for sorcery.[3] In such a battle he of course had the clergy against him all along the line; and it is as an anti-clerical that he figures in clerical history. The clerical hostility to his ethics he repaid with interest, setting himself to develop to the utmost, in the interest of lay freedom, the Lutheran admission of the divine right of princes.[4] This he turned not against freedom of opinion but against ecclesiastical claims, very much in the spirit of Hobbes, who may have influenced him.

The perturbed Mosheim, while candidly confessing that Thomasius is the founder of academic freedom in Germany, pronounces that the "famous jurists" who were led by Thomasius "set up a new fundamental principle of church polity—namely, the supreme authority and power of the civil magistrate," so tending to create the opinion "that the ministers of religion are not to be accounted ambassadors of God, but vicegerents of the chief magistrates. They also weakened not a little the few remaining prerogatives and advantages which were left of the vast number formerly possessed

[1] Pusey, p. 86, *note*. It is surprising that Pusey does not make more account of Thomasius's naturalistic treatment of polygamy and suicide, which he showed to be not criminal in terms of natural law.

[2] Compare Weber, *Gesch. der deutschen Lit.* § 81 (ed. 1880, pp. 90–91); Pusey, as cited, p. 114, *note;* Enfield's *Hist. of Philos.* (abst. of Brucker's *Hist. crit. philos.*), 1840, pp. 610–612; Ueberweg, ii, 115; and Schlegel's note in Reid's Mosheim, p. 790, with Karl Hillebrand, *Six Lect. on the Hist. of German Thought*, 1880, pp. 64–65. There is a modern monograph by A. Nicoladoni, *Christian Thomasius; ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Aufklärung*, 1888.

[3] Baron de Bielfeld, *Progrès des Allemands*, 3e éd. 1767, i, 24. "Before Thomasius," writes Bielfeld, "an old woman could not have red eyes without running the risk of being accused of witchcraft and burned at the stake."

[4] Schmid, pp. 493–97. Thomasius's principal writings on this theme were: *Vom Recht evangelischen Fürsten in Mitteldingen* (1692); *Vom Recht evangelischen Fürsten in theologischen Streitigkeiten* (1696); *Vom Recht evangelischen Fürsten gegen Ketzer* (1697).

by the clergy; and maintained that many of the maxims and regulations of our churches which had come down from our fathers were relics of popish superstition. This afforded matter for long and pernicious feuds and contests between our theologians and our jurists.....It will be sufficient for us to observe, what is abundantly attested, that they diminished much in various places the respect for the clergy, the reverence for religion, and the security and prosperity of the Lutheran Church."[1] Pusey, in turn, grudgingly allows that "the study of history was revived and transformed through the views of Thomasius."[2]

6. A personality of a very different kind emerges in the same period in Johann Conrad Dippel (1673–1734), who developed a system of rationalistic mysticism, and as to whom, says an orthodox historian, "one is doubtful whether to place him in the class of pietists or of rationalists, of enthusiasts or of scoffers, of mystics or of freethinkers."[3] The son of a preacher, he yet "exhibited in his ninth year strong doubts as to the catechism." After a tolerably free life as a student he turned Pietist at Strasburg, lectured on astrology and palmistry, preached, and got into trouble with the police. In 1698 he published under the pen-name of "Christianus Democritus" his book, *Gestäuptes Papstthum der Protestirenden* ("The Popery of the Protestantizers Whipped"), in which he so attacked the current Christian ethic of salvation as to exasperate both Churches.[4] The stress of his criticism fell firstly on the unthinking Scripturalism of the average Protestant, who, he said, while reproaching the Catholic with setting up in the crucifix a God of wood, was apt to make for himself a God of paper.[5] In his repudiation of the "bargain" or "redemption" doctrine of the historic Church he took up positions which were as old as Abailard, and which were one day to become respectable; but in his own life he was much of an Ishmaelite, with wild notions of alchemy and gold-making; and after predicting that he should live till 1808, he died suddenly in 1734, leaving a doctrine which appealed only to those constitutionally inclined, on the lines of the earlier English Quakers, to set the inner light above Scripture.[6]

[1] *Ec. Hist.* 17 Cent. sect. ii, pt. ii, ch. i, §§ 11, 14. It is noteworthy that the Pietists at Halle did not scruple to ally themselves for a time with Thomasius, he being opposed to the orthodox party. Kahnis, *Internal Hist. of Ger. Protestantism*, p. 114.

[2] Pusey, as cited, p. 121. Cp. p. 113.

[3] Hagenbach, *Kirchengeschichte des 18. und 19. Jahrh.* 2te Aufl. i, 164. (This matter is not in the abridged translation.)

[4] See the furious account of him by Mosheim, 17 C. sec. ii, pt. ii, ch. i, § 33.

[5] Hagenbach, last cit. p. 169.

[6] Noack, *Die Freidenker in der Religion*, Th. iii, Kap. 1; Bruno Bauer, *Einfluss des englischen Quäkerthums auf die deutsche Cultur und auf das englisch-russische Projekt einer Weltkirche*, 1878, pp. 41–44.

7. Among the pupils of Thomasius at Halle was Theodore Louis Lau, who, born of an aristocratic family, became Minister of Finances to the Duke of Courland, and after leaving that post held a high place in the service of the Elector Palatine. While holding that office Lau published a small Latin volume of *pensées* entitled *Meditationes Theologicæ-Physicæ*, notably deistic in tone. This gave rise to such an outcry among the clergy that he had to leave Frankfort, only, however, to be summoned before the consistory of Königsberg, his native town, and charged with atheism (1719). He thereupon retired to Altona, where he had freedom enough to publish a reply to his clerical persecutors.[1]

8. While Thomasius was still at work, a new force arose of a more distinctly academic cast. This was the adaptation of Leibnitz's system by CHRISTIAN WOLFF, who, after building up a large influence among students by his method of teaching,[2] came into public prominence by a rectorial address[3] at Halle (1721) in which he warmly praised the ethics of Confucius. Such praise was naturally held to imply disparagement of Christianity; and as a result of the pietist outcry Wolff was condemned by the king to exile from Prussia, under penalty of the gallows,[4] all "atheistical" writings being at the same time forbidden. Wolff's system, however, prevailed so completely, in virtue of its lucidity and the rationalizing tendency of the age, that in the year 1738 there were said to be already 107 authors of his cast of thinking. Nevertheless, he refused to return to Halle on any invitation till the accession (1740) of Frederick the Great, one of his warmest admirers, whereafter he figured as *the* German thinker of his age. His teaching, which for the first time popularized philosophy in the German language, in turn helped greatly, by its ratiocinative cast, to promote the rationalistic temper, though orthodox enough from the modern point of view. Under the new reign, however, pietism and Wolffism alike lost prestige,[5] and the age of anti-Christian and Christian rationalism began. Thus the period of free-thinking in Germany follows close upon one of religious revival. The 6,000 theologians trained at Halle in the first generation of the century had "worked like a leaven through all Germany."[6] "Not since the time of the Reformation had Germany such a large number of truly pious preachers and laymen as towards the end of the first

1 Pref. to French tr. of the *Meditationes*, 1770, pp. xii–xvii. Lau died in 1740.
2 Tholuck, *Abriss*, as cited, p. 10.
3 Trans. in English, 1750.
4 Hagenbach, tr. pp. 35–36; Saintes, p. 61; Kahnis, as cited, p. 114.
5 Hagenbach, pp. 37–39. It is to be observed (Tholuck, *Abriss*, p. 23) that the Wolffian philosophy was reinstated in Prussia by royal mandate in 1739, a year before the accession of Frederick the Great. But we know that Frederick championed him.
6 Tholuck, *Abriss*, as cited, p. 5.

half of the eighteenth century."[1] There, as elsewhere, religion intellectually collapsed.

As to Wolff's rationalistic influence see Cairns, *Unbelief in the Eighteenth Century*, 1881, p. 173; Pusey, pp. 115–19; Pünjer, p. 529; Lechler, pp. 448–49. "It cannot be questioned that, in his philosophy, the main stress rests upon the rational" (Kahnis, as cited, p. 28). "Francke and Lange (pietists)..... saw atheism and corruption of manners springing up from Wolff's school" (before his exile). *Id.* p. 113. Wolff's chief offence lay in stressing natural religion, and in indicating, as Tholuck observes, that that could be demonstrated, whereas revealed religion could only be believed (*Abriss*, p. 18). He greatly pleased Voltaire by the dictum that men ought to be just even though they had the misfortune to be atheists. It is noted by Tholuck, however (*Abriss*, as cited, p. 11, *note*), that the decree for Wolff's expulsion was inspired not by his theological colleagues but by two military advisers of the king. Tholuck's own criticism resolves itself into a protest against Wolff's predilection for logical connection in his exposition. The fatal thing was that Wolff accustomed German Christians to reason.

9. Even before the generation of active pressure from English and French deism there were clear signs that rationalism had taken root in German life. On the impulse set up by the establishment of the Grand Lodge at London in 1717, Freemasonic lodges began to spring up in Germany, the first being founded at Hamburg in 1733.[2] The deism which in the English lodges was later toned down by orthodox reaction was from the first pronounced in the German societies, which ultimately passed on the tradition to the other parts of the Continent. But the new spirit was not confined to secret societies. Wolffianism worked widely. In the so-called *Wertheim Bible* (1735) Johann Lorenz Schmid, in the spirit of the Leibnitz-Wolffian theology, "undertook to translate the Bible, and to explain it according to the principle that in revelation only that can be accepted as true which does not contradict the reason."[3] This of course involved no thorough-going criticism; but the spirit of innovation was strong enough in Schmid to make him undermine tradition at many points, and later carried him so far as to translate Tindal's *Christianity as old as Creation*. So far was he in advance of his time that when his Wertheim Bible was officially condemned throughout Germany he found no defenders.[4] The Wolffians were

[1] Tholuck, *Abriss*, as cited, p. 6. [2] Kahnis, p. 55.
[3] Pünjer, i, 544. Cp. Tholuck, *Abriss*, pp. 19–22.
[4] Tholuck, *Abriss*, p. 22. Schmid was for a time supposed to be the author of the *Wolfenbüttel Fragments* of Reimarus (below, p. 327).

in comparison generally orthodox; and another writer of the same school, Martin Knutzen, professor at Königsberg (1715–1751), undertook in a youthful thesis *De æternitate mundi impossibili* (1735) to rebut the old Averroïst doctrine, revived by modern science, of the indestructibility of the universe. A few years later (1739) he published a treatise entitled *The Truth of Christianity Demonstrated by Mathematics*, which succeeded as might have been expected.

10. To the same period belong the first activities of JOHANN CHRISTIAN EDELMANN (1698–1767), one of the most energetic freethinkers of his age. Trained philosophically at Jena under the theologian Budde, a bitter opponent of Wolff, and theologically in the school of the Pietists, he was strongly influenced against official orthodoxy through reading the *Impartial History of the Church and of Heretics*, by Gottfried Arnold, an eminently anti-clerical work, which nearly always takes the side of the heretics.[1] In the same heterodox direction he was swayed by the works of Dippel. At this stage Edelmann produced his *Unschuldige Wahrheiten* ("Innocent Truths"), in which he takes up a pronouncedly rationalist and latitudinarian position, but without rejecting "revelation"; and in 1736 he went to Berleburg, where he worked on the Berleburg translation of the Bible, a Pietist undertaking, somewhat on the lines of Dippel's mystical doctrine, in which a variety of incredible Scriptural narratives, from the six days' creation onwards, are turned to mystical purpose.[2] In this occupation Edelmann seems to have passed some years. Gradually, however, he came more and more under the influence of the English deists; and he at length withdrew from the Pietist camp, attacking his former associates for the fanaticism into which their thought was degenerating. It was under the influence of Spinoza, however, that he took his most important steps. A few months after meeting with the *Tractatus* he began (1740) the first part of his treatise *Moses mit aufgedecktem Angesichte* ("Moses with unveiled face"), an attack at once on the doctrine of inspiration and on that of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. The book was intended to consist of twelve parts; but after the appearance of three it was prohibited by the imperial fisc, and the published parts burned by the hangman at Hamburg and elsewhere. Nonetheless, Edelmann continued his propaganda, publishing in 1741 or 1742 *The Divinity*

[1] *Unpartheyische Kirchen- und Ketzerhistorie*, 1699–1700, 2 tom. fol.—fuller ed. 3 tom. fol. 1740. Compare Mosheim's angry account of it with Murdock's note in defence: Reid's ed. p. 804. Bruno Bauer describes it as epoch-making (*Einfluss des englischen Quäkerthums*, p. 42). This history had a great influence on Goethe in his teens, leading him, he says, to the conviction that he, like so many other men, should have a religion of his own, which he goes on to describe. It was a re-hash of Gnosticism. (*Wahrheit und Dichtung*, B. viii; *Werke*, ed. 1866, xi, 344 *sq.*)

[2] Cp. Hagenbach, *Kirchengeschichte*, i, 171; Pünjer, i, 279.

of Reason,[1] and in 1741 *Christ and Belial*. In 1749 or 1750 his works were again publicly burned at Frankfurt by order of the imperial authorities; and he had much ado to find anywhere in Germany safe harbourage, till he found protection under Frederick at Berlin, where he died in 1767.

Edelmann's teaching was essentially Spinozist and pantheistic,[2] with a leaning to the doctrine of metempsychosis. As a pantheist he of course entirely rejected the divinity of Jesus, pronouncing inspiration the appanage of all; and the gospels were by him dismissed as late fabrications, from which the true teachings of the founder could not be learned; though, like nearly all the freethinkers of that age, he estimated Jesus highly.[3] A German theologian complains, nevertheless, that he was "more just toward heathenism than toward Judaism; and more just toward Judaism than toward Christianity"; adding: "What he taught had been thoroughly and ingeniously said in France and England; but from a German theologian, and that with such eloquent coarseness, with such a mastery in expatiating in blasphemy, such things were unheard of."[4] The force of Edelmann's attack may be gathered from the same writer's account of him as a "bird of prey" who rose to a "wicked height of opposition, not only against the Lutheran Church, but against Christianity in general."

11. Even from decorous and official exponents of religion, however, there came "naturalistic" and semi-rationalistic teaching, as in the *Reflections on the most important truths of religion*[5] (1768–1769) of J. F. W. Jerusalem, Abbot of Marienthal in Brunswick, and later of Riddagshausen (1709–1789). Jerusalem had travelled in Europe, and had spent two years in Holland and one in England, where he studied the deists and their opponents. "In England alone," he declared, "is mankind original."[6] Though really written by way of defending Christianity against the freethinkers, in par-

[1] *Die Göttlichkeit der Vernunft.*

[2] Noack, Th. iii, Kap. 2: Saintes, pp. 85–86; Pünjer, p. 442. It is interesting to find Edelmann supplying a formula latterly utilized by the so-called "New Theology" in England—the thesis that "the reality of everything which exists is God," and that there can therefore be no atheists, since he who recognizes the universe recognizes God.

[3] Naigeon, by altering the words of Diderot, caused him to appear one of the exceptions; but he was not. See Rosenkranz, *Diderot's Leben und Werke*, Vorb. p. vii.

[4] Kahnis, pp. 128–29. Edelmann's Life was written by Pratje, *Historische Nachrichten von Edelmann's Leben*, 1755. It gives a list of replies to his writings (p. 205 *sq.*). Apropos of the first issue of Strauss's *Leben Jesu*, a volume of *Erinnerungen* of Edelmann was published at Clausthal in 1839 by W. Elster; and Strauss in his *Dogmatik* avowed the pleasure with which he had made the acquaintance of so interesting a writer. A collection of extracts from Edelmann's works, entitled *Der neu eröffnete Edelmann*, was published at Bern in 1847; and the *Unschuldige Wahrheiten* was reprinted in 1846. His Autobiography, written in 1752, was published in 1849.

[5] *Betrachtungen über die vornehmsten Wahrheiten der Religion.* Another apologetic work of the period marked by rational moderation and tolerance was the *Vertheidigten Glauben der Christen* of the Berlin court-preacher A. W. F. Sack (1754).

[6] Art. by Wagenmann in *Allgemeine deutsche Biographie.*

ticular against Bolingbroke and Voltaire,[1] the very title of his book is suggestive of a process of disintegration; and in it certain unedifying Scriptural miracles are actually rejected.[2] It was probably this measure of adaptation to new needs that gave it its great popularity in Germany and secured its translation into several other languages. Goethe called him a "freely and gently thinking theologian"; and a modern orthodox historian of the Church groups him with those who "contributed to the spread of Rationalism by sermons and by popular doctrinal and devotional works."[3] Jerusalem was, however, at most a semi-rationalist, taking a view of the fundamental Christian dogmas which approached closely to that of Locke.[4] It was, as Goethe said later, the epoch of common sense; and the very theologians tended to a "religion of nature."[5]

12. Alongside of home-made heresy there had come into play a new initiative force in the literature of English deism, which began to be translated after 1740,[6] and was widely circulated till, in the last third of the century, it was superseded by the French. The English answers to the deists were frequently translated likewise, and notoriously helped to promote deism[7]—another proof that it was not their influence that had changed the balance of activity in England. Under a freethinking king, even clergymen began guardedly to accept the deistic methods; and the optimism of Shaftesbury began to overlay the optimism of Leibnitz;[8] while a French scientific influence began with La Mettrie,[9] Maupertuis, and Robinet. Even the Leibnitzian school, proceeding on the principle of immortal monads, developed a doctrine of the immortality of the souls of animals[10]—a position not helpful to orthodoxy. There was thus a general stirring of doubt among educated people,[11] and we find mention in Goethe's Autobiography of an old gentleman of Frankfort who

[1] Hagenbach, *Kirchengeschichte*, i, 355.

[2] Pünjer, i, 542.

[3] Kurz, *Hist. of the Christian Church from the Reformation*, Eng. tr. ii, 274. A Jesuit, A. Merz, wrote four replies to Jerusalem. One was entitled *Frag ob durch die biblische Simplicität allein ein Freydenker oder Deist bekehret.....werden könne* ("Can a Freethinker or Deist be converted by Biblical Simplicity alone?"), 1775.

[4] Cp. Hagenbach, i, 353; tr. p. 120. Jerusalem was the father of the gifted youth whose suicide (1775) moved Goethe to write *The Sorrows of Werther*, a false presentment of the real personality, which stirred Lessing (his affectionate friend) to publish a volume of the dead youth's essays, in vindication of his character. The father had considerable influence in purifying German style. Cp. Goethe, *Wahrheit und Dichtung*, Th. ii, B. vii; *Werke*, ed. 1866, xi, 272; and Hagenbach, i, 354.

[5] Goethe, as last cited, pp. 268–69.

[6] Lechler, *Gesch. des englischen Deismus*, pp. 447–52. The translations began with that of Tindal (1741), which made a great sensation.

[7] Pusey, pp. 125, 127, citing Twesten; Gostwick, *German Culture and Christianity*, p. 36, citing Ernesti. Thorschmid's *Freidenker Bibliothek*, issued in 1765–67, collected both translations and refutations. Lechler, p. 451.

[8] Lange, *Gesch. des Materialismus*, i, 405 (Eng. tr. ii, 146–47).

[9] Lange, i, 347, 399 (Eng. tr. ii, 76, 137).

[10] Lange, i, 396–97 (ii, 134–35).

[11] Goethe tells of having seen in his boyhood, at Frankfort, an irreligious French romance publicly burned, and of having his interest in the book thereby awakened. But this seems to have been during the French occupation. (*Wahrheit und Dichtung*, B. iv; *Werke*, xi, 146.)

avowed, as against the optimists, "Even in God I find defects (*Fehler*)."[1]

On the other hand, there were instances in Germany of the phenomenon, already seen in England in Newton and Boyle, of men of science devoting themselves to the defence of the faith. The most notable cases were those of the mathematician Euler and the biologist von Haller. The latter wrote Letters (to his Daughter) *On the most important Truths of Revelation* (1772)[2] and other apologetic works. Euler in 1747 published at Berlin, where he was professor, his *Defence of Revelation against the Reproaches of Freethinkers;*[3] and in 1769 his *Letters to a German Princess*, of which the argument notably coincides with part of that of Berkeley against the free-thinking mathematicians. Haller's position comes to the same thing. All three men, in fact, grasped at the argument of despair—the inadequacy of the human faculties to sound the mystery of things; and all alike were entirely unable to see that it logically cancelled their own judgments. Even a theologian, contemplating Haller's theorem of an incomprehensible omnipotence countered in its merciful plan of salvation by the set of worms it sought to save, comments on the childishness of the philosophy which confidently described the plans of deity in terms of what it declared to be the blank ignorance of the worms in question.[4] Euler and Haller, like some later men of science, kept their scientific method for the mechanical or physical problems of their scientific work, and brought to the deepest problems of all the self-will, the emotionalism, and the irresponsibility of the ignorant average man. Each did but express in his own way the resentment of the undisciplined mind at attacks upon its prejudices; and Haller's resort to poetry as a vehicle for his religion gives the measure of his powers on that side. Thus in Germany as in England the "answer" to the freethinkers was a failure. Men of science playing at theology and theologians playing at science alike failed to turn the tide of opinion, now socially favoured by the known deism of the king. German orthodoxy, says a recent Christian apologist, fell "with a rapidity reminding one of the capture of Jericho."[5] Goethe, writing of the general attitude to Christianity about 1768, sums up that "the Christian religion wavered between its own historic-positive base and a pure deism, which, grounded on morality, was in turn to re-establish ethics."[6]

[1] *Id.* B. iv, *end.*

[2] Translated into English 1780; 2nd ed. 1793. The translator claims for Haller great learning (2nd ed. p. xix). He seems in reality to have had very little, as he represents that Jesus in his day "was the only teacher who recommended chastity to men" (p. 82).

[3] *Rettung der Offenbarung gegen die Einwürfe der Freigeister.* Haller wrote under a similar title, 1775–76.

[4] Baur, *Gesch. der christl. Kirche*, iv, 599.

[5] Gostwick, p. 15.

[6] *Wahrheit und Dichtung*, B. viii; *Werke*, xi, 329.

Frederick's attitude, said an early Kantian, had had "an almost magical influence" on popular opinion (Willich, *Elements of the Critical Philosophy*, 1798, p. 2). With this his French teachers must have had much to do. Lord Morley pronounces (*Voltaire*, 4th ed. p. 123) that French deism "never made any impression on Germany," and that "the teaching of Leibnitz and Wolff stood like a fortified wall against the French invasion." This is contradicted by much German testimony; in particular by Lange's (*Gesch. des Mater.* i, 318), though he notes that French materialism could not get the upper hand. Laukhard, who expressed the highest admiration for Tindal, as having wholly delivered him from dogmatism, avowed that Voltaire, whom everybody read, had perhaps done more harm to priest religion than all the books of the English and German deists together (*Leben*, 1792–1802, Th. i, p. 268).

Tholuck gravely affirms (*Abriss*, p. 33) that the acquaintance with the French "deistery and frivolity" in Germany belongs to a "somewhat later period than that of the English." Naturally it did. The bulk of the English deistic literature was printed before the printing of the French had begun! French MSS. would reach German princes, but not German pastors. But Tholuck sadly avows that the French deism (of the serious and pre-Voltairean portions of which he seems to have known nothing) had a "frightful" influence on the upper classes, though not on the clergy (p. 34). Following him, Kahnis writes (*Internal History*, p. 41) that "English and French Deism met with a very favourable reception in Germany —the latter chiefly in the higher circles, the former rather among the educated middle classes." (He should have added, "the younger theologians.") Baur, even in speaking disparagingly of the French as compared with the English influence, admits (*Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 2te Aufl. p. 347) that the former told upon Germany. Cp. Tennemann, Bohn. tr. pp. 385, 388. Hagenbach shows great ignorance of English deism, but he must have known something of German; and he writes (tr. p. 57) that "the imported deism," both English and French, "soon swept through the rifts of the Church, and gained supreme control of literature." Cp. pp. 67–68. See Croom Robertson's *Hobbes*, pp. 225–26, as to the persistence of a succession of Hobbes and Locke in Germany in the teeth of the Wolffian school, which soon lost ground after 1740. It is further noteworthy that Brucker's copious *Historia Critica Philosophiæ* (1742–44), which as a mere learned record has great merit, and was long the standard authority in Germany, gives great praise to Locke and little space to Wolff. (See Enfield's abstract, pp. 614, 619 *sq.*) The Wolffian philosophy, too, had been rejected and disparaged by both Herder and Kant—who were alike deeply influenced by Rousseau—in the

third quarter of the century; and was generally discredited, save in the schools, when Kant produced the *Critique of Pure Reason*. See below, pp. 337, 345.

13. Frederick, though reputed a Voltairean freethinker *par excellence*, may be claimed for Germany as partly a product of the rationalizing philosophy of Wolff. In his first letter to Voltaire, written in 1736, four years before his accession, he promises to send him a translation he has had made of the "accusation and the justification" of Wolff, "the most celebrated philosopher of our days, who, for having carried light into the darkest places of metaphysics, and for having treated the most difficult matters in a manner no less elevated than precise and clear, is cruelly accused of irreligion and atheism"; and he speaks of getting translated Wolff's *Treatise of God, the Soul, and the World*. When he became a thoroughgoing freethinker is not clear, for Voltaire at this time had produced no explicit anti-Christian propaganda. At first the new king showed himself disposed to act on the old maxim that freethought is bad for the common people. In 1743–44 he caused to be suppressed two German treatises by one Gebhardi, a contributor to Gottsched's magazines, attacking the Biblical miracles; and in 1748 he sent a young man named Rüdiger to Spandau for six months' confinement for printing an anti-Christian work by one Dr. Pott.[1] But as he grew more confident in his own methods he extended to men of his own way of thinking the toleration he allowed to all religionists, save insofar as he vetoed the mutual vituperation of the sects, and such proselytizing as tended to create strife. With an even hand he protected Catholics, Greek Christians, and Unitarians, letting them have churches where they would;[2] and when, after the battle of Striegau, a body of Protestant peasantry asked his permission to slay all the Catholics they could find, he answered with the gospel precept, "Love your enemies."[3]

Beyond the toleration of all forms of religion, however, he never went; though he himself added to the literature of deism. Apart from his verses we have from him the posthumous treatise *Pensées sur la Religion*, probably written early in his life, where the rational case against the concepts of revelation and of miracles is put with a calm and sustained force. Like the rest, he is uncritical in his deism; but, that granted, his reasoning is unanswerable. In talk he was wont to treat the clergy with small respect;[4] and he wrote

[1] Schlosser, *Hist. of Eighteenth Cent.*, Eng. tr. 1843, i, 150; Hagenbach, tr. p. 66.
[2] Hagenbach, tr. p. 63.
[3] *Id.*, *Kirchengeschichte*, i, 232.
[4] Kahnis, p. 43; Tholuck, *Abriss*, p. 34.

more denunciatory things concerning them than almost any freethinker of the century.[1] Bayle, Voltaire, and Lucretius were his favourite studies; and as the then crude German literature had no attraction for him, he drew to his court many distinguished Frenchmen, including La Mettrie, Maupertuis, D'Alembert, D'Argens, and above all Voltaire, between whom and him there was an incurable incompatibility of temper and character, and a persistent attraction of force of mind, which left them admiring without respecting each other, and unable to abstain from mutual vituperation. Under Frederick's vigorous rule all speech was free save such as he considered personally offensive, as Voltaire's attack on Maupertuis; and after a stormy reign he could say, when asked by Prince William of Brunswick whether he did not think religion one of the best supports of a king's authority, "I find order and the laws sufficient. .....Depend upon it, countries have been admirably governed when your religion had no existence."[2] Religion certainly had no part in his personality in the ordinary sense of the term. Voltaire was wont to impute to him atheism; when La Mettrie died, the mocker, then at Frederick's court, remarked that the post of his majesty's atheist was vacant, but happily the Abbé de Prades was there to fill it. In effect, Frederick professed Voltaire's own deism; but of all the deists of the time he had least of the religious temperament and most of sheer cynicism.

> The attempt of Carlyle to exhibit Frederick as a practical believer is a flagrant instance of that writer's subjective method. He tells (*Hist. of Friedrich*, bk. xviii, ch. x) that at the beginning of the battle of Leuthen a column of troops near the king sang a hymn of duty (which Carlyle calls "the sound of Psalms"); that an officer asked whether the singing should be stopped, and that the king said "By no means." His "hard heart seems to have been touched by it. Indeed, there is in him, in those grim days, a tone (!) as of trust in the Eternal, as of real religious piety and faith, scarcely noticeable elsewhere in his history. His religion—and *he had in withered forms a good deal of it, if we will look well*—being almost always in a strictly voiceless state, nay, ultra voiceless, or voiced the wrong way, as is too well known." Then comes the assertion that "a moment after" the king said "*to someone, Ziethen probably*, 'With men

[1] See the extracts of Büchner, *Zwei gekrönte Freidenker*, 1890, pp. 45–47.

[2] Thiébault, *Mes Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin*, 2e édit. 1805, i, 126–28. See i, 355–56, ii, 78–82, as to the baselessness of the stories (*e.g.*, Pusey, *Histor. Inq. into Ger. Rationalism*, p. 123) that Frederick changed his views in old age. Thiébault, a strict Catholic, is emphatic in his negation: "The persons who assert that [his principles] became more religious.....have either lied or been themselves mistaken." Carlyle naturally detests Thiébault. The rumour may have arisen out of the fact that in his *Examen critique du Système de la Nature* Frederick counter-argues d'Holbach's impeachment of Christianity. The attack on kings gave him a fellow-feeling with the Church.

like these, don't you think I shall have victory this day!'" Here, with the very spirit of unveracity at work before his eyes, Carlyle plumps for the fable. Yet the story, even if true, would give no proof whatever of religious belief.

In point of fact, Frederick was a much less "religious" deist than Voltaire. He erected no temple to his unloved God. And a perusal of his dialogue of Pompadour and the Virgin (*Dialogues des morts*) may serve to dispose of the thesis that the German mind dealt reverently and decently with matters which the French mind handled frivolously. That performance outgoes in ribaldry anything of the age in French.

As the first modern freethinking king, Frederick is something of a test case. Son of a man of narrow mind and odious character, he was himself no admirable type, being neither benevolent nor considerate, neither truthful nor generous; and in international politics, after writing in his youth a treatise in censure of Machiavelli, he played the old game of unscrupulous aggression. Yet he was not only the most competent, but, as regards home administration, the most conscientious king of his time. To find him a rival we must go back to the pagan Antonines and Julian, or at least to St. Louis of France, who, however, was rather worsened than bettered by his creed.[1] Henri IV of France, who rivalled him in sagacity and greatly excelled him in human kindness, was far his inferior in devotion to duty.

The effect of Frederick's training is seen in his final attitude to the advanced criticism of the school of d'Holbach, which assailed governments and creeds with the same unsparing severity of logic and moral reprobation. Stung by the uncompromising attack, Frederick retorts by censuring the rashness which would plunge nations into civil strife because kings miscarry where no human wisdom could avoid miscarriage. He who had wantonly plunged all Germany into a hell of war for his sole ambition, bringing myriads to misery, thousands to violent death, and hundreds of his own soldiers to suicide, could be virtuously indignant at the irresponsible audacity of writers who indicted the whole existing system for its imbecility and injustice. But he did reason on the criticism; he did ponder it; he did feel bound to meet argument with argument; and he left his arguments to the world. The advance on previous regal practice is noteworthy: the whole problem of politics is at once brought to the test of judgment and persuasion. Beside the Christian Georges and the Louis's of his century, and beside his Christian father, his superiority in

[1] Cp. the argument of Faure, *Hist. de Saint Louis*, 1866, i, 242-43; ii, 597.

judgment and even in some essential points of character is signal. Such was the great deist king of the deist age; a deist of the least religious temper and of no very fine moral material to begin with.

The one contemporary monarch who in any way compares with him in enlightenment, Joseph II of Austria, belonged to the same school. The main charge against Frederick as a ruler is that he did not act up to the ideals of the school of Voltaire. In reply to the demand of the French deists for an abolition of all superstitious teaching, he observed that among the 16,000,000 inhabitants of France at most 200,000 were capable of philosophic views, and that the remaining 15,800,000 were held to their opinions by "insurmountable obstacles."[1] This, however, had been said by the deists themselves (*e.g.*, d'Holbach, préf. to *Christianisme dévoilé*); and such an answer meant that he had no idea of so spreading instruction that all men should have a chance of reaching rational beliefs. This attitude was his inheritance from the past. Yet it was under him that Prussia began to figure as a first-rate culture force in Europe.

14. The social vogue of deistic thought could now be traced in much of the German *belles-lettres* of the time. The young JAKOB VON MAUVILLON (1743–1794), secretary of the King of Poland and author of several histories, in his youth translated from the Latin into French Holberg's *Voyage of Nicolas Klimius* (1766), which made the tour of Europe, and had a special vogue in Germany. Later in life, besides translating and writing abundantly and intelligently on matters of economic and military science—in the latter of which he had something like expert status—Mauvillon became a pronounced heretic, though careful to keep his propaganda anonymous.

The most systematic dissemination of the new ideas was that carried on in the periodical published by CHRISTOPH FRIEDRICH NICOLAI (1733–1811) under the title of *The General German Library* (founded 1765), which began with fifty contributors, and at the height of its power had a hundred and thirty, among them being Lessing, Eberhard, and Moses Mendelssohn. In the period from its start to the year 1792 it ran to 106 volumes; and it has always been more or less bitterly spoken of by later orthodoxy as the great library of that movement. Nicolai, himself an industrious and scholarly writer, produced among many other things a satirical romance famous in its day, the *Life and Opinions of Magister Sebaldus Nothanker*, ridiculing the bigots and persecutors the type of Klotz, the antagonist of Lessing, and some of Nicolai's less

[1] *Examen de l'Essai sur les préjugés*, 1769. See the passage in Lévy-Bruhl, *L'Allemagne depuis Leibniz*, p. 89.

unamiable antagonists,[1] as well as various aspects of the general social and literary life of the time. To Nicolai is fully due the genial tribute paid to him by Heine,[2] were it only for the national service of his "Library." Its many translations from the English and French freethinkers, older and newer, concurred with native work to spread a deistic rationalism, labelled *Aufklärung*, or enlightenment, through the whole middle class of Germany.[3] Native writers in independent works added to the propaganda. ANDREAS RIEM (1749–1807), a Berlin preacher, appointed by Frederick a hospital chaplain,[4] wrote anonymously against priestcraft as no other priest had yet done. "No class of men," he declared, in language perhaps echoed from his king, "has ever been so pernicious to the world as the priesthood. There were laws at all times against murderers and bandits, but not against the assassin in the priestly garb. War was repelled by war, and it came to an end. The war of the priesthood against reason has lasted for thousands of years, and it still goes on without ceasing."[5] GEORG SCHADE (1712–1795), who appears to have been one of the believers in the immortality of animals, and who in 1770 was imprisoned for his opinions in the Danish island of Christianscø, was no less emphatic, declaring, in a work on Natural Religion on the lines of Tindal (1760), that "all who assert a supernatural religion are godless impostors."[6] Constructive work of great importance, again, was done by J. B. BASEDOW (1723–1790), who early became an active deist, but distinguished himself chiefly as an educational reformer, on the inspiration of Rousseau's *Émile*,[7] setting up a system which "tore education away from the Christian basis,"[8] and becoming in virtue of that one of the most popular writers of his day. It is latterly admitted even by orthodoxy that school education in Germany had in the seventeenth century become a matter of learning by rote, and that such reforms as had been set up in some of the schools of the Pietists had in Basedow's day come to nothing.[9] As Basedow was the first to set up vigorous reforms, it is not too much to call him an instaurator of rational education, whose chief fault was to be too far ahead of his age. This, with the personal flaw of an unamiable habit of wrangling in all companies, caused the failure of his "Philanthropic Institute," established in 1771, on the invitation of

[1] G. Weber, *Gesch. der deutschen Literatur*, 11te Aufl. p. 99.
[2] *Zur Gesch. der Relig. und Philos. in Deutschland—Werke*, ed. 1876, iii, 63–64. Goethe's blame (*W. und D.*, B. vii) is passed on purely literary grounds.
[3] Hagenbach, tr. pp. 103–104; Cairns, p. 177.
[4] This post he left to become secretary of the Academy of Painting.
[5] Cited by Pünjer, i, 545–46.
[6] *Id.* p. 546.
[7] Hagenbach, tr. pp. 100–103; Saintes, pp. 91–92; Pünjer, p. 536; Noack, Th. iii, Kap. 7.
[8] Hagenbach, *Kirchengeschichte*, i, 298, 351.
[9] *Id.* i, 294 *sq.*

the Prince of Dessau, to carry out his educational ideals. Quite a number of other institutions, similarly planned, after his lead, by men of the same way of thinking, as Canope and Salzmann, in the same period, had no better success.

Goethe, who was clearly much impressed by Basedow, and travelled with him, draws a somewhat antagonistic picture of him on retrospect (*Wahrheit und Dichtung*, B. xiv). He accuses him in particular of always obtruding his anti-orthodox opinions; not choosing to admit that religious opinions were being constantly obtruded on Basedow. Praising Lavater for his more amiable nature, Goethe reveals that Lavater was constantly propounding *his* orthodoxy. Goethe, in fine, was always lenient to pietism, in which he had been brought up, and to which he was wont to make sentimental concessions. He could never forget his courtly duties towards the established convention, and so far played the game of bigotry. Hagenbach notes (i, 298, *note*), without any deprecation, that after Basedow had published in 1763–1764 his *Philalethie*, a perfectly serious treatise on natural as against revealed religion, one of the many orthodox answers, that by Pastor Goeze, so inflamed against him the people of his native town of Hamburg that he could not show himself there without danger. And this is the man accused of "obtruding his views." Baur is driven, by way of disparagement of Basedow and his school, to censure their self-confidence—precisely the quality which, in religious teachers with whom he agreed, he as a theologian would treat as a mark of superiority. Baur's attack on the moral utilitarianism of the school is still less worthy of him. (*Gesch. der christl. Kirche*, iv, 595–96). It reads like an echo of Kahnis (as cited, p. 46 *sq.*).

Yet another influential deist was JOHANN AUGUST EBERHARD (1739–1809), for a time a preacher at Charlottenburg, but driven out of the Church for the heresy of his *New Apology of Sokrates; or the Final Salvation of the Heathen* (1772).[1] The work in effect placed Sokrates on a level with Jesus,[2] which was blasphemy.[3] But the outcry attracted the attention of Frederick, who made Eberhard a Professor of Philosophy at Halle, where later he opposed the idealism of both Kant and Fichte. Substantially of the same school was the less pronouncedly deistic cleric STEINBART,[4] author of a utilitarian *System of Pure Philosophy, or Christian doctrine of Happiness*, now forgotten, who had been variously influenced by Locke and Voltaire.[5] Among the less heterodox but still rationalizing

[1] The book is remembered in France by reason of Eberhard's amusing mistake of treating as a serious production of the Sorbonne the skit in which Turgot derided the Sorbonne's findings against Marmontel's *Bélisaire*. [2] Hagenbach, tr. p. 109.
[3] Eberhard, however, is respectfully treated by Lessing in his discussion on Leibnitz's view as to eternal punishment. [4] Noack, Th. iii, Kap. 8. [5] Saintes, pp. 92–93.

clergy of the period were J. J. Spalding, author of a work on *The Utility of the Preacher's Office*, a man of the type labelled "Moderate" in the Scotland of the same period, and as such antipathetic to emotional pietists;[1] and Zollikofer, of the same school—both inferribly influenced by the deism of their day. Considerably more of a rationalist than these was the clergyman W. A. Teller (1734–1804), author of a New Testament Lexicon, who reached a position virtually deistic, and intimated to the Jews of Berlin that he would receive them into his church on their making a deistic profession of faith.[2]

15. If it be true that even the rationalizing defenders of Christianity led men on the whole towards deism,[3] much more must this hold true of the new school who applied rationalistic methods to religious questions in their capacity as theologians. Of this school the founder was JOHANN SALOMO SEMLER (1725–1791), who, trained as a Pietist at Halle, early thought himself into a more critical attitude,[4] albeit remaining a theological teacher. Son of a much-travelled army chaplain, who in his many campaigns had learned much of the world, and in particular seen something of religious frauds in the Catholic countries, Semler started with a critical bias which was cultivated by wide miscellaneous reading from his boyhood onwards. As early as 1750, in his doctoral dissertation defending certain texts against the criticism of Whiston, he set forth the view, developed a century later by Baur, that the early Christian Church contained a Pauline and a Petrine party, mutually hostile. The merit of his research won him a professorship at Halle; and this position he held till his death, despite such heresy as his rejection from the canon of the books of Ruth, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, the Song of Solomon, the two books of Chronicles, and the Apocalypse, in his *Freie Untersuchung des Canons* (1771–1774)—a work apparently inspired by the earlier performance of Richard Simon.[5] His intellectual life was for long a continuous advance, always in the direction of a more rationalistic comprehension of religious history; and he reached, for his day, a remarkably critical

[1] Cp. Hagenbach, *Kirchengeschichte*, i, 348, 363.

[2] *Id.* i, 367; tr. pp. 124–25; Saintes, p. 94; Kahnis, p. 45. Pusey (150–51, *note*) speaks of Teller and Spalding as belonging, with Nicolai, Mendelssohn, and others, to a "secret institute, whose object was to remodel religion and alter the form of government." This seems to be a fantasy.

[3] So Steffens, cited by Hagenbach, tr. p. 124.

[4] P. Gastrow, *Joh. Salomo Semler*, 1905, p. 45. See Pusey, 140–41, *note*, for Semler's account of the rigid and unreasoning orthodoxy against which he reacted. (Citing Semler's *Lebenschreibung*, ii, 121–61.) Semler, however, records that Baumgarten, one of the theological professors at Halle, would in expansive moods defend theism and make light of theology (*Lebenschreibung*, i, 108). Cp. Tholuck, *Abriss*, as cited, pp. 12, 18. Pusey notes that "many of the principal innovators had been pupils of Baumgarten" (p. 132, citing Niemeyer).

[5] Cp. Dr. G. Karo, *Johann Salomo Semler*, 1905, p. 25; Saintes, pp. 129–31.

view of the mythical element in the Old Testament.[1] Not only did he recognize that Genesis must have pre-Mosaic origins, and that such books as the Proverbs and the Psalms were of later date and other origin than those traditionally assigned:[2] his historical sense worked on the whole narrative. Thus he recognized the mythical character of the story of Samson, and was at least on the way towards a scientific handling of the New Testament.[3] But in his period and environment a systematic rationalism was impossible; he was always a "revelation-believing Christian"; his critical intelligence was always divided against itself;[4] and his powers were expended in an immense number of works,[5] which failed to yield any orderly system, while setting up a general stimulus, in despite of their admitted unreadableness.[6]

In his latter days he strongly opposed and condemned the more radical rationalism of his pupil Bahrdt, and of the posthumous work of Reimarus, here exemplifying the common danger of the intellectual life, for critical as well as uncritical minds. After provoking many orthodox men by his own challenges, he is roused to fury alike by the genial rationalism of Bahrdt and by the cold analysis of Reimarus; and his attack on the Wolfenbüttel Fragments published by Lessing is loaded with a vocabulary of abuse such as he had never before employed[7]—a sure sign that he had no scientific hold of his own historical conception. Like the similarly infuriated semi-rational defenders of the historicity of Jesus in our own day, he merely "followed the tactic of exposing the lack of scientific knowledge and theological learning" of the innovating writer. Always temperamentally religious, he died in the evangelical faith. But his own influence in promoting rationalism is now obvious and unquestioned,[8] and he is rightly to be reckoned a main founder of "German rationalism"—that is, academic rationalism on theologico-historical lines[9]—although he always professed to be merely rectifying orthodox conceptions. In the opinion of Pusey "the revival of historical interpretation by Semler became the most extensive instrument of the degradation of Christianity."

Among the other theologians of the time who exercised a similar influence to the Wolffian, TÖLLNER attracts notice by the comparative courage with which, in the words of an orthodox critic, he "raised, as

1 Cp. Gostwick, p. 51; Pünjer, i, 561.
2 Karo, p. 44.
3 Cp. Saintes, p. 132 *sq.*
4 Cp. Karo, pp. 3, 8, 16, 28.
5 Over a hundred and seventy in all. Pünjer, i, 560; Gastrow, p. 637.
6 Karo, pp. 5–6.
7 Gastrow, p. 223.
8 Pusey, p. 142; A. S. Farrar, *Crit. Hist. of Freethought*, p. 313.
9 Cp. Karo, p. 5 *sq.*; Stäudlin, cited by Tholuck, *Abriss*, p. 39.

much as possible, natural religion to revelation," and, "on the other hand, lowered Scripture to the level of natural light."[1] First he published (1764) *True Reasons why God has not furnished Revelation with evident proofs*,[2] arguing for the modern attenuation of the idea of revelation; then a work on *Divine Inspiration* (1771) in which he explicitly avowed that "God has in no way, either inwardly or outwardly, dictated the sacred books. The writers were the real authors"[3]—a declaration not to be counterbalanced by further generalities about actual divine influence. Later still he published a *Proof that God leads men to salvation even by his revelation in Nature*[4] (1766)—a form of Christianity little removed from deism. Other theologians, such as Ernesti, went far with the tide of illuminism; and when the orthodox Chr. A. Crusius died at Leipzig in 1781, Jean Paul Richter, then a student, wrote that people had become "too much imbued with the spirit of illuminism" to be of his school. "Most, almost all the students," adds Richter, incline to heterodoxy; and of the professor Morus he tells that "wherever he can explain away a miracle, the devil, etc., he does so." Of this order of accommodators, a prominent example was MICHAELIS (1717–1791), whose reduction of the Mosaic legislation to motives of every-day utility is still entertaining.

16. Much more notorious than any other German deist of his time was CARL FRIEDRICH BAHRDT (1741–1792), a kind of raw Teutonic Voltaire, and the most popularly influential German freethinker of his age. In all he is said to have published a hundred and twenty-six books and tracts,[5] thus approximating to Voltaire in quantity if not in quality. Theological hatred has so pursued him that it is hard to form a fair opinion as to his character; but the record runs that he led a somewhat Bohemian and disorderly life, though a very industrious one. While a preacher in Leipzig in 1768 he first got into trouble—"persecution" by his own account; "disgrace for licentious conduct," by that of his enemies. In any case, he was at this period quite orthodox in his beliefs.[6] That there was no serious disgrace is suggested by the fact that he was appointed Professor of Biblical Antiquities at Erfurt; and soon afterwards, on the recommendation of Semler and Ernesti, at Giessen (1771). While holding that post he published his "modernized" translation of the New Testament, done from the point of view of belief in

[1] Kahnis, p. 116.
[2] *Wahre Gründe warum Gott die Offenbarung nicht mit augenscheinlichen Beweisen versehen hat.*
[3] *Die Göttliche Eingebung*, 1771.
[4] *Beweis das Gott die Menschen bereits durch seine Offenbarung in der Natur zur Seligkeit führe.*
[5] Gostwick, p. 53; Pünjer, i, 546, *note*.
[6] Cp. Kahnis, pp. 132–36, as to Bahrdt's early morals.

revelation, following it up by his *New Revelations of God in Letters and Tales* (1773), which aroused Protestant hostility. After teaching for a time in a new Swiss "Philanthropin"—an educational institution on Basedow's lines—he obtained a post as a district ecclesiastical superintendent in the principality of Türkheim on the Hardt; whereafter he was enabled to set up a "Philanthropin" of his own in the castle of Heidesheim, near Worms. The second edition of his translation of the New Testament, however, aroused Catholic hostility in the district; the edition was confiscated, and he found it prudent to make a tour in Holland and England, only to receive, on his return, a missive from the imperial consistory declaring him disabled for any spiritual office in the Holy German Empire. Seeking refuge in Halle, he found Semler grown hostile; but made the acquaintance of Eberhard, with the result of abandoning the remains of his orthodox faith. Henceforth he regarded Jesus, albeit with admiration, as simply a great teacher, "like Moses, Confucius, Sokrates, Semler, Luther, and myself";[1] and to this view he gave effect in the third edition of his New Testament translation, which was followed in 1782 by his *Letters on the Bible in Popular Style* (*Volkston*), and in 1784 by his *Completion* (*Ausführung*) *of the Plan and Aim of Jesus in Letters* (1784), and his *System of Moral Religion* (1787). More and more fiercely antagonized, he duly retaliated on the clergy in his *Church and Heretic Almanack* (1781); and after for a time keeping a tavern, he got into fresh trouble by printing anonymous satires on the religious edict of 1788, directed against all kinds of heresy,[2] and was sentenced to two years' imprisonment in a fortress —a term reduced by the king to one year. Thereafter he ended not very happily his troublous life in Halle in 1792.

The weakest part of Bahrdt's performance is now seen to be his application of the empirical method of the early theological rationalists, who were wont to take every Biblical prodigy as a merely perverted account of an incident which certainly happened. That method—which became identified with the so-called "rationalism" of Germany in that age, and is not yet discarded by rationalizing theologians—is reduced to open absurdity in his hands, as when he makes Moses employ fireworks on Mount Sinai, and Jesus feed the five thousand by stratagem, without miracle. But it was not by such extravagances that he won and kept a hearing throughout his life. It is easy to see on retrospect that the source of his influence as a writer lay above all things in his healthy critical ethic, his own mode of progression being by way of simple common sense and natural

[1] *Geschichte seines Lebens*, etc. 1700–91, iv, 119.

[2] See below, p. 331.

feeling, not of critical research. His first step in rationalism was to ask himself "how Three Persons could be One God"—this while believing devoutly in revelation, miracles, the divinity of Jesus, and the Atonement. Under the influence of a naturalist travelling in his district, he gave up the orthodox doctrine of the Atonement, feeling himself "as if new-born" in being freed of what he had learned to see as a "pernicious and damnable error."[1] It was for such writing that he was hated and persecuted, despite his habitual eulogy of Christ as "the greatest and most venerable of mortals." His offence was not against morals, but against theology; and he heightened the offence by his vanity.

Bahrdt's real power may be inferred from the fury of some of his opponents. "The wretched Bahrdt" is Dr. Pusey's Christian account of him. Even F. C. Baur is abusive. The American translators of Hagenbach, Messrs. Gage and Stuckenberg, have thought fit to insert in their chapter-heading the phrase "Bahrdt, the Theodore Parker of Germany." As Hagenbach has spoken of Bahrdt with special contempt, the intention can be appreciated; but the intended insult may now serve as a certificate of merit to Bahrdt. Bishop Hurst solemnly affirms that "What Jeffreys is to the judicial history of England, Bahrdt is to the religious history of German Protestantism. Whatever he touched was disgraced by the vileness of his heart and the Satanic daring of his mind" (*History of Rationalism*, ed. 1867, p. 119; ed. 1901, p. 139). This concerning doctrines of a nearly invariable moral soundness, which to-day would be almost universally received with approbation. Pünjer, who cannot at any point indict the doctrines, falls back on the professional device of classing them with the "platitudes" of the *Aufklärung;* and, finding this insufficient to convey a disparaging impression to the general reader, intimates that Bahrdt, connecting ethic with rational sanitation, "does not shrink from the coarseness of laying down" a rule for bodily health, which Pünjer does not shrink from quoting (pp. 549–50). Finally Bahrdt is dismissed as "the theological public-housekeeper of Halle." So hard is it for men clerically trained to attain to a manly rectitude in their criticism of anti-clericals. Bahrdt was a great admirer of the Gospel Jesus; so Cairns (p. 178) takes a lenient view of his life. On that and his doctrine cp. Hagenbach, pp. 107–10; Pünjer, i, 546–50; Noack, Th. iii, Kap. 5. Goethe satirized him in a youthful *Prolog*, but speaks of him not unkindly in the *Wahrheit und Dichtung*. As a writer he is much above the German average.

17. Alongside of these propagators of popular rationalism stood

[1] *Geschichte seines Lebens*, Kap. 22; ii, 223 *sq.*

a group of companion deists usually considered together—GOTTHOLD EPHRAIM LESSING (1729–1781), HERMANN SAMUEL REIMARUS (1694–1768), and MOSES MENDELSSOHN (1729–1786). The last-named, a Jew, "lived entirely in the sphere of deism and of natural religion,"[1] and sought, like the deists in general, to give religion an ethical structure; but he was popular chiefly as a constructive theist and a defender of the doctrine of immortality on non-Christian lines. His *Phædon* (1767), setting forth that view, had a great vogue.[2] One of his more notable teachings was an earnest declaration against any connection between Church and State; but like Locke and Rousseau he so far sank below his own ideals as to agree in arguing for a State enforcement of a profession of belief in a God[3]—a negation of his own plea. With much contemporary popularity, he had no permanent influence; and he seems to have been completely broken-hearted over Jacobi's disclosure of the final pantheism of Lessing, for whom he had a great affection.

> See the monograph of Rabbi Schreiber, of Bonn, *Moses Mendelssohn's Verdienste um die deutsche Nation* (Zürich, 1880), pp. 41–42. The strongest claim made for Mendelssohn by Rabbi Schreiber is that he, a Jew, was much more of a German patriot than Goethe, Schiller, or Lessing. Heine, however, pronounces that "As Luther against the Papacy, so Mendelssohn rebelled against the Talmud" (*Zur Gesch. der Relig. und Philos. in Deutschland: Werke*, ed. 1876, iii, 65).

LESSING, on the other hand, is one of the outstanding figures in the history of Biblical criticism, as well as of German literature in general. The son of a Lutheran pastor, Lessing became in a considerable measure a rationalist, while constantly resenting, as did Goethe, the treatment of religion in the fashion in which he himself treated non-religious opinions with which he did not agree.[4] It is clear that already in his student days he had become substantially an unbeliever, and that it was on this as well as other grounds that he refused to become a clergyman.[5] Nor was he unready to jeer at

[1] Baur, *Gesch. der chr. Kirche*, iv, 597. [2] Translated into English in 1789.

[3] Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem*, Abschn. I—*Werke*, 1838, p. 239 (Eng. tr. 1838, pp. 50–51); Rousseau, *Contrat Social*, liv. iv, ch. viii, near end; Locke, as cited above, p. 117. Cp. Bartholmèss, *Hist. crit. des doctr. relig. de la philos. moderne*, 1855, i, 145; Baur, as last cited.

[4] See his *Werke*, ed. 1866, v, 317—*Aus dem Briefe, die neueste Literatur betreffend*, 49ter Brief.

[5] If Lessing's life were sketched in the spirit in which orthodoxy has handled that of Bahrdt, it could be made unedifying enough. Even Goethe remarks that Lessing "enjoyed himself in a disorderly tavern life" (*Wahrheit und Dichtung*, B. vii); and all that Hagenbach maliciously charges against Basedow in the way of irregularity of study is true of him. On that and other points, usually glosed over, see the sketch in Taylor's *Historic Survey of German Poetry*, 1830, i, 332–37. All the while, Lessing is an essentially sound-hearted and estimable personality; and he would probably have been the last man to echo the tone of the orthodox towards the personal life of the freethinkers who went further in unbelief than he.

the bigots when they chanced to hate where he was sympathetic.[1] On the side of religious problems, he was primarily and permanently influenced by two such singularly different minds as Bayle[2] and Rousseau, the first appealing to and eliciting his keen critical faculty, the second his warm emotional nature; and he never quite unified the result. From first to last he was a freethinker in the sense that he never admitted any principle of authority, and was stedfastly loyal to the principle of freedom of utterance. He steadily refused to break with his freethinking friend Mylius, and he never sought to raise odium against any more advanced freethinker on the score of his audacity.[3] In his *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, indeed, dealing with a German play in which Mohammedanism in general, and one Ismenor in particular, in the time of the Crusades are charged with the sin of persecution, he remarks that "these very Crusades, which in their origin were a political stratagem of the popes, developed into the most inhuman persecutions of which Christian superstition has ever made itself guilty: the true religion had then the most and the bloodiest Ismenors."[4] In his early *Rettungen* (Vindications), again, he defends the dubious Cardan and impersonally argues the *pros* and *cons* of Christianity and Mohammedanism in a fashion possible only to a skeptical mind.[5] And in his youth, as in his last years, he maintained that "there have long been men who disregarded all revealed religions and have yet been good men.[6] In his youth, however, he was more of a Rousseauist than of an intellectual philosopher, setting up a principle of "the heart" against every species of analytic thought, including even that of Leibnitz, which he early championed against the Wolfian adaptation of it.[7] The sound principle that conduct is more important than opinion he was always apt, on the religious side, to strain into the really contrary principle that opinions which often went with good conduct were necessarily to be esteemed. So when the rationalism of the day seriously or otherwise (in Voltairean Berlin it was too apt to be otherwise) assailed the creed of his parents, whom he loved and honoured, sympathy in his case as in Goethe's always predetermined his attitude;[8] and it is not untruly said of him that he did prefer

[1] *E.g.* his fable *The Bull and the Calf* (*Fabeln*, ii, 5), àpropos of the clergy and Bayle.
[2] Sime, *Life of Lessing*, 1877, i, 102.
[3] *E.g.* his early notice of Diderot's *Lettre sur les Aveugles*. Sime, i, 94.
[4] *Dramaturgie*, Stück 7. [5] Sime, i, 103–109. [6] Sime, i, 73, 107; ii, 253.
[7] In his *Gedanke über die Herrnhuter*, written in 1750. See Adolf Stahr's *Lessing, sein Leben und seine Werke*, 7te Aufl. ii, 183 *sq*.
[8] Julian Schmidt puts the case sympathetically: "He had learned in his father's house what value the pastoral function may have for the culture of the people. He was *bibelfest*, instructed in the history of his church, Protestant in spirit, full of genuine reverence for Luther, full of high respect for historical Christianity, though on reading the Fathers he could say hard things of the Church." *Gesch. der deutschen Litteratur von Leibniz bis auf unsere Zeit*, ii (1886), 326.

the orthodox to the heterodox party, like Gibbon, "inasmuch as the balance of learning which attracted his esteem was [then] on that side."[1] We thus find him, about the time when he announces to his father that he had doubted concerning the Christian dogmas,[2] rather nervously proving his essential religiousness by dramatically defending the clergy against the prejudices of popular freethought as represented by his friend Mylius, who for a time ran in Leipzig a journal called the *Freigeist*—not a very advanced organ.[3]

Lessing was in fact, with his versatile genius and his vast reading, a man of moods rather than a systematic thinker, despite his powerful critical faculty; and alike his emotional and his critical side determined his aversion to the attempts of the "rationalizing" clergy to put religion on a common-sense footing. His personal animosity to Voltaire and to Frederick would also influence him; but he repugned even the decorous "rationalism" of the theologians of his own country. When his brother wrote him to the effect that the basis of the current religion was false, and the structure the work of shallow bunglers, he replied that he admitted the falsity of the basis, but not the incompetence of those who built up the system, in which he saw much skill and address. Shallow bunglers, on the other hand, he termed the schemers of the new system of compromise and accommodation.[4] In short, as he avowed in his fragment on Bibliolatry, he was always "pulled this way and that" in his thought on the problem of religion.[5] For himself, he framed (or perhaps adopted)[6] a pseudo-theory of the *Education of the Human Race* (1780), which has served the semi-rationalistic clergy of our own day in good stead; and adapted Rousseau's catching doctrine that the true test of religion lies in feeling and not in argument.[7] Neither doctrine, in short, has a whit more philosophical value than the other "popular philosophy" of the time, and neither was fitted to have much immediate influence; but both pointed a way to the more philosophic apologists of religion, while baulking the orthodox.[8] If all this were more than a piece of defensive strategy, it was no more scientific than the semi-rationalist theology which he contemned. The "education" theorem, on its merits, is indeed a

[1] Taylor, as cited, p. 361.
[2] Sime, i, 73.
[3] See Lessing's rather crude comedy, *Der Freigeist*, and Sime's *Life*, i, 41–42, 72, 77.
[4] Cp. his letters to his brother of which extracts are given by Sime, ii, 191–92.
[5] Sime, ii, 188.
[6] As to the authorship see Saintes, pp. 101–102; and Sime's *Life of Lessing*, i, 261–62, where the counter-claim is rejected.
[7] *Zur Geschichte und Literatur*, aus dem 4ten Beitr.—*Werke*, vi, 142 *sq.* See also in his *Theologische Streitschriften* the *Axiomata* written against Pastor Goeze. Cp. Schwarz, *Lessing als Theologe*, 1854, pp. 146, 151; and Pusey, as cited, p. 51, *note*.
[8] Compare the regrets of Pusey (pp. 51, 155), Cairns (p. 195), Hagenbach (pp. 89–97), and Saintes (p. 100).

discreditable paralogism; and only our knowledge of his affectional bias can withhold us from counting it a mystification. On analysis it is found to have no logical content whatever. "Christianity" Lessing made out to be a "universal principle," independent of its pseudo-historical setting; thus giving to the totality of the admittedly false tradition the credit of an ethic which in the terms of the case is simply human, and in all essentials demonstrably pre-Christian. His propaganda of this kind squares ill with his paper on *The Origin of Revealed Religion*, written about 1860. There he professes to hold by a naturalist view of religion. All "positive" or dogmatic creeds he ascribes to the arrangements that men from time to time found it necessary to make as to the means of applying "natural" religion. "Hence all positive and revealed religions are alike true and alike false; alike true, inasmuch as it has everywhere been necessary to come to terms over different things in order to secure agreement and unity in the public religion; alike false, inasmuch as that over which men came to terms does not so much stand close to the essential (*nicht sowohl.....neben dem Wesentlichen besteht*), but rather weakens and oppresses it. The best revealed or positive religion is that which contains the fewest conventional additions to natural religion; that which least limits the effects of natural religion."[1] This is the position of Tindal and the English deists in general; and it seems to have been in this mood that Lessing wrote to Mendelssohn about being able to "help the downfall of the most frightful structure of nonsense only under the pretext of giving it a new foundation."[2] On the historical side, too, he had early convinced himself that Christianity was established and propagated "by entirely natural means"[3]—this before Gibbon. But, fighter as he was, he was not prepared to lay his cards on the table in the society in which he found himself. In his strongest polemic there was always an element of mystification;[4] and his final pantheism was only privately avowed.

It was through a series of outside influences that he went so far, in the open, as he did. Becoming the librarian of the great Bibliothek of Wolfenbüttel, the possession of the hereditary Prince (afterwards Duke) of Brunswick, he was led to publish the "Anonymous Fragments" known as the *Wolfenbüttel Fragments* (1774–1778),

[1] *Sämmtliche Schriften*, ed. Lachmann, 1857, xi (2), 248. Sime (ii, 190) mistranslates this passage; and Schmidt (ii, 326) mutilates it by omissions. Fontanes (*Le Christianisme moderne: Étude sur Lessing*, 1867, p. 171) paraphrases it very loosely. [2] Sime, ii, 190.

[3] Stahr, ii, 239; Sime, ii, 189.

[4] See Sime, ii, 222, 233; Stahr, ii, 251. Hettner, an admirer, calls the early *Christianity of Reason* a piece of sophistical dialectic. *Litteraturgeschiche des 18ten Jahrhunderts*, ed. 1872, iii, 588–89.

wherein the methods of the English and French deists are applied with a new severity to both the Old and the New Testament narratives. It is now put beyond doubt that they were the work of REIMARUS,[1] who had in 1755 produced a defence of "Natural Religion"—that is, of the theory of a Providence—against La Mettrie, Maupertuis, and older materialists, which had a great success in its day.[2] At his death, accordingly, Reimarus ranked as an admired defender of theism and of the belief in immortality.[3] He was the son-in-law of the esteemed scholar Fabricius, and was for many years Professor of Oriental Languages in the Hamburg Academy. The famous research which preserves his memory was begun by him at the age of fifty, for his own satisfaction, and was elaborated by him during twenty years, while he silently endured the regimen of the intolerant Lutheranism of his day.[4] As he left the book it was a complete treatise entitled *An Apology for the Rational Worshipper of God;* but his son feared to have it published, though Lessing offered to take the whole risk; and it was only by the help of the daughter, Elise Reimarus,[5] Lessing's friend, that the fragments came to light. As the Berlin censor would not give official permission,[6] Lessing took the course of issuing them piecemeal in a periodical series of selections from the treasures of the Wolfenbüttel Library, which had privilege of publication. The first, *On the Toleration of Deists*, which attracted little notice, appeared in 1774; four more, which made a stir, in 1777; and only in 1778 was "the most audacious of all," *On the Aim of Jesus and his Disciples*,[7] published as a separate book. Collectively they constituted the most serious attack yet made in Germany on the current creed, though their theory of the true manner of the gospel history of course smacks of the pre-scientific period. A generation later, however, they were still "the radical book of the anti-supernaturalists" in Germany.[8]

As against miracles in general, the Resurrection in particular, and Biblical ethics in general, the attack of Reimarus was irresistible, but his historical construction is pre-scientific. The

[1] Stahr, ii, 243. Lessing said the report to this effect was a lie; but this and other mystifications appear to have been by way of fulfilling his promise of secrecy to the Reimarus family. Cairns, pp. 203, 209. Cp. Farrar, *Crit. Hist. of Freethought, note* 29.

[2] See it analysed by Bartholmèss, *Hist. crit. des doctr. relig. de la philos. moderne*, i, 147-67; and by Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historic Jesus* (trans. of *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*), 1910.

[3] Gostwick, p. 47; Bartholmèss, i, 166. His book was translated into English (*The Principal Truths of Natural Religion Defended and Illustrated*) in 1766; into Dutch in 1758; in part into French in 1768; and seven editions of the original had appeared by 1798.

[4] Stahr, ii, 241-44. [5] *Id.* ii, 245.

[6] The statement that, in Lessing's age, "in north Germany men were able to think and write freely" (Conybeare, *Hist. of N. T. Crit.*, p. 80) is thus seen to be highly misleading.

[7] *Von dem Zwecke Jesus und seiner Jünger*, Braunschweig, 1778.

[8] Taylor, *Histor. Survey of German Poetry*, i, 365.

method is, to accept as real occurrences all the non-miraculous episodes, and to explain them by a general theory. Thus the appointment of the seventy apostles—a palpable myth—is taken as a fact, and explained as part of a scheme by Jesus to obtain temporal power; and the scourging of the money-changers from the Temple, improbable enough as it stands, is made still more so by supposing it to be part of a scheme of insurrection. The method further involves charges of calculated fraud against the disciples or evangelists—a historical misconception which Lessing repudiated, albeit not on the right grounds. See the sketch in Cairns, p. 197 *sq.*, which indicates the portions of the treatise produced later by Strauss. Cp. Pünjer, i, 550–57; Noack, Th. iii, Kap. 4. Schweitzer (*Von Reimarus zu Wrede*), in his satisfaction at the agreement of Reimarus with his own conception of an "eschatological" Jesus, occupied with "the last things," gives Reimarus extravagant praise. Strauss rightly notes the weakness of the indictment of Moses as a worker of fraud (*Voltaire*, 2te Ausg. p. 407).

It is but fair to say that Reimarus's fallacy of method, which was the prevailing one in his day, has not yet disappeared from criticism. As we have seen, it was employed by Pomponazzi in the Renaissance (vol. i, p. 377), and reintroduced in the modern period by Connor and Toland. It is still employed by some professed rationalists, as Dr. Conybeare. It has, however, in all likelihood suggested itself spontaneously to many inquirers. In the *Phædrus* Plato presents it as applied by empirical rationalizers to myths at that time.

Though Lessing at many points oppugned the positions of the *Fragments*, he was led into a fiery controversy over them, in which he was unworthily attacked by, among others, Semler, from whom he had looked for support; and the series was finally stopped by authority. There can now be no doubt that Lessing at heart agreed with Reimarus on most points of negative criticism,[1] but reached a different emotional estimate and attitude. All the greater is the merit of his battle for freedom of thought. Thereafter, as a final check to his opponents, he produced his famous drama *Nathan the Wise*, which embodies Boccaccio's story of *The Three Rings*, and has ever since served as a popular lesson of tolerance in Germany.[2] In the end, he seems to have become, to at least some extent, a pantheist;[3] but he never expounded any coherent and comprehensive

[1] Stahr, ii, 253–54.

[2] Cp. Introd. to Willis's trans. of *Nathan*. The play is sometimes attacked as being grossly unfair to Christianity. (*E.g.* Crouslé, *Lessing*, 1863, p. 206.) The answer to this complaint is given by Sime, ii, 252 *sq.*

[3] See Cairns, *Appendix*, Note I; Willis, *Spinoza*, pp. 149–62; Sime, ii, 299–303; and Stahr, ii, 219–30, giving the testimony of Jacobi. Cp. Pünjer, i, 564–85. But Heine laughingly adjures Moses Mendelssohn, who grieved so intensely over Lessing's Spinozism, to rest quiet in his grave: "Thy Lessing was indeed on the way to that terrible error.....

set of opinions,[1] preferring, as he put it in an oft-quoted sentence, the state of search for truth to any consciousness of possessing it.[2]

He left behind him, however, an important fragment, which constituted one of his most important services to national culture—his "*New Hypothesis* concerning the evangelists as merely human writers." He himself thought that he had done nothing "more important or ingenious"[3] of the kind; and though his results were in part unsound and impermanent, he is justly to be credited with the first scientific attempt to deduce the process of composition of the gospels[4] from primary writings by the first Christians. Holding as he did to the authenticity and historicity of the fourth gospel, he cannot be said to have gone very deep; but two generations were to pass before the specialists got any further. Lessing had shown more science and more courage than any other pro-Christian scholar of the time, and, as the orthodox historian of rationalism has it, "Though he did not array himself as a champion of rationalism, he proved himself one of the strongest promoters of its reign."[5]

18. Deism was now as prevalent in educated Germany as in France or England; and, according to a contemporary preacher, "Berliner" was about 1777 a synonym for "rationalist."[6] Wieland, one of the foremost German men of letters of his time, is known to have become a deist of the school of Shaftesbury;[7] and in the leading journal of the day he wrote on the free use of reason in matters of faith.[8] Some acts of persecution by the Church show how far the movement had gone. In 1774 we find a Catholic professor at Mayence, Lorenzo Isenbiehl, deposed and sent back to the seminary for two years on the score of "deficient theological knowledge," because he argued (after Collins) that the text Isaiah vii, 14 applied not to the mother of Jesus but to a contemporary of the prophet; and when, four years later, he published a book on the same thesis,

but the Highest, the Father in Heaven, saved him in time by death. He died a good deist, like thee and Nicolai and Teller and the Universal German Library" (*Zur Gesch. der Rel. und Philos. in Deutschland*, B. ii, near end.—*Werke*, ed. 1876, iii, 69).

[1] See in Stahr, ii, 184–85, the various characterizations of his indefinite philosophy. Stahr's own account of him as anticipating the moral philosophy of Kant is as overstrained as the others. Gastrow, an admirer, expresses wonder (*Johann Salomo Semler*, p. 188) at the indifference of Lessing to the critical philosophy in general.

[2] Sime, ii, ch. xxix, gives a good survey.

[3] Letter to his brother, Feb., 1778.

[4] Strauss, *Das Leben Jesu* (the second) *Einleitung*, § 14.

[5] Hurst, *History of Rationalism*, 3rd ed. p. 130. "It was a popular belief, as an organ of pious opinion announced to its readers, that at his death the devil came and carried him away like a second Faust." Sime, ii, 330.

[6] Cited by Hurst, *Hist. of Rationalism*, 3rd ed. p. 125. Outside Berlin, however, matters went otherwise till late in the century. Kurz tells (*Gesch. der deutschen Literatur*, ii, 461 *b*) that "the indifference of the learned towards native literature was so great that even in the year 1761 Abbt could write that in Rinteln there was nobody who knew the names of Moses Mendelssohn and Lessing."

[7] Karl Hillebrand, *Lectures on the Hist. of German Thought*, 1880, p. 109.

[8] *Deutsche Merkur*, Jan. and March, 1788 (*Werke*, ed. 1797, xxix, 1–144: cited by Stäudlin, *Gesch. der Rationalismus und Supernaturalismus*, 1826, p. 233).

in Latin, he was imprisoned. Three years later still, a young Jesuit of Salzburg, named Steinbuhler, was actually condemned to death for writing some satires on Roman Catholic ceremonies, and, though afterwards pardoned, died of the ill-usage he had undergone in prison.[1] It may have been the sense of danger aroused by such persecution that led to the founding, in 1780, of a curious society which combined an element of freethinking Jesuitism with free-masonry, and which included a number of statesmen, noblemen, and professors—Goethe, Herder, and the Duke of Weimar being among its adherents. But it is difficult to take seriously the accounts given of the order.[2]

The spirit of rationalism, in any case, was now so prevalent that it began to dominate the work of the more intelligent theologians, to whose consequent illogical attempts to strain out by the most dubious means the supernatural elements from the Bible narratives[3] the name of "rationalism" came to be specially applied,[4] that being the kind of criticism naturally most discussed among the clergy. Taking rise broadly in the work of Semler, reinforced by that of the English and French deists and that of Reimarus, the method led stage by stage to the scientific performance of Strauss and Baur, and the recent "higher criticism" of the Old and New Testaments. Noteworthy at its outset as exhibiting the tendency of official believers to make men, in the words of Lessing, irrational philosophers by way of making them rational Christians,[5] this order of "rationalism" in its intermediate stages belongs rather to the history of Biblical scholarship than to that of freethought, since more radical work was being done by unprofessional writers outside, and deeper problems were raised by the new systems of philosophy. Within the Lutheran pale, however, there were some hardy thinkers. A striking figure of the time, in respect of his courage and thoroughness, is the Lutheran pastor J. H. SCHULZ,[6] who so strongly combated the compromises of the Semler school in regard to the Pentateuch, and argued so plainly for a severance of morals from religion as to bring about his own dismissal (1792).[7] Schulz's

[1] Kurtz, *Hist. of the Chr. Church*, Eng. tr. 1864, ii, 224.
[2] T. C. Perthes, *Das Deutsche Staatsleben vor der Revolution*, 262 *sq.*, cited by Kahnis pp. 58–59.
[3] See above, pp. 321, 328.
[4] Kant distinguishes explicitly between "rationalists," as thinkers who would not deny the possibility of a revelation, and "naturalists," who did. See the *Religion innerhalb der grenzen der blossen Vernunft*, Stück iv, Th. i. This was in fact the standing significance of the term in Germany for a generation.
[5] Letter to his brother, February 2, 1774.
[6] Known as Zopf-Schulz from his wearing a pigtail in the fashion then common among the laity. "An old insolent rationalist," Kurtz calls him (ii, 270).
[7] Hagenbach, *Kirchengeschichte*, i, 372; Gostwick, pp. 52, 54.

Philosophical Meditation on Theology and Religion[1] (1784) is indeed one of the most pronounced attacks on orthodox religion produced in that age. But it is in itself a purely speculative construction. Following the current historical method, he makes Moses the child of the Egyptian princess, and represents him as imposing on the ignorant Israelites a religion invented by himself, and expressive only of his own passions. Jesus in turn is extolled in the terms common to the freethinkers of the age; but his conception of God is dismissed as chimerical; and Schulz finally rests in the position of Edelmann, that the only rational conception of deity is that of the "sufficient ground of the world," and that on this view no man is an atheist.[2]

Schulz's dismissal appears to have been one of the fruits of the orthodox edict (1788) of the new king, Frederick William II, the brother of Frederick, who succeeded in 1786. It announced him—in reality a "strange compound of lawless debauchery and priest-ridden superstition"[3]—as the champion of religion and the enemy of freethinking; forbade all proselytizing, and menaced with penalties all forms of heresy,[4] while professing to maintain freedom of conscience. The edict seems to have been specially provoked by fresh literature of a pronouncedly freethinking stamp, though it lays stress on the fact that "so many clergymen have the boldness to disseminate the doctrines of the Socinians, Deists, and Naturalists under the name of *Aufklärung*." The work of Schulz would be one of the provocatives, and there were others. In 1785 had appeared the anonymous *Moroccan Letters*,[5] wherein, after the model of the *Persian Letters* and others, the life and creeds of Germany are handled in a quite Voltairean fashion. The writer is evidently familiar with French and English deistic literature, and draws freely on both, making no pretence of systematic treatment. Such writing, quietly turning a disenchanting light of common sense on Scriptural incredibilities and Christian historical scandals, without a trace of polemical zeal, illustrated at once the futility of Kant's claim, in the second edition of his *Critique of Pure Reason*, to counteract "freethinking unbelief" by transcendental philosophy. And though the writer is careful to point to the frequent association of Christian fanaticism with regicide, his very explicit appeal for a

[1] *Philosophische Betrachtung über Theologie und Religion überhaupt, und über die Jüdische insonderheit*, 1784.
[2] Pünjer, i, 544–45.
[3] Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, ch. ix, Bohn ed. p. 71.
[4] See the details in Hagenbach, *Kirchengeschichte*, i, 368–72; Kahnis, p. 60.
[5] *Marokkanische Briefe. Aus dem Arabischen.* Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1785. The Letters purport to be written by one of the Moroccan embassy at Vienna in 1783.

unification of Germany,[1] his account of the German Protestant peasant and labourer as the most dismal figure in Germany, Holland, and Switzerland,[2] and his charge against Germans of degrading their women,[3] would not enlist the favour of the authorities for his work. Within two years (1787) appeared, unsigned, an even more strongly anti-Christian and anti-clerical work, *The In Part Only True System of the Christian Religion*,[4] ascribed to Jakob von Mauvillon,[5] whom we have seen twenty-one years before translating the freethinking romance of Holberg. Beginning his career as a serious publicist by translating Raynal's explosive history of the Indies (7 vols. 1774–78), he had done solid work as a historian and as an economist, and also as an officer in the service of the Duke of Brunswick and a writer on military science. The *True System* is hostile alike to priesthoods and to the accommodating theologians, whose attempt to rationalize Christianity on historical lines it flouts in Lessing's vein as futile. Mauvillon finds unthinkable the idea of a revelation which could not be universal; rejects miracles and prophecies as vain bases for a creed; sums up the New Testament as planless; and pronounces the ethic of Christianity, commonly regarded as its strongest side, the weakest side of all. He sums up, in fact, in a logical whole, the work of the English and French deists.[6] To such propaganda the edict of repression was the official answer. It naturally roused a strong opposition;[7] but though it ultimately failed, through the general breakdown of European despotisms, it was not without injurious effect. The first edict was followed in a few months by one which placed the press and all literature, native and foreign, under censorship. This policy, which was chiefly inspired by the new king's Minister of Religion, Woellner, was followed up in 1791 by the appointment of a committee of three reactionaries—Hermes, Hilmer, and Woltersdorf—who not only saw to the execution of the edicts, but supervised the schools and churches. Such a regimen, aided by the reaction against the Revolution, for a time prevented any open propaganda on the part of men officially placed; and we shall see it hampering and humiliating Kant; but it left the leaven of anti-supernaturalism to work all the more effectively among the increasing crowd of university students.

[1] *Briefe*, xxi. [2] P. 49. [3] P. 232.

[4] *Das zum Theil einzige wahre System der christlichen Religion.* It had been composed in its author's youth under the title *False Reasonings of the Christian Religion;* and the MS. was lost through the bankruptcy of a Dutch publisher.

[5] Noack, Th. III. Kap. 9, p. 194.

[6] Mauvillon further collaborated with Mirabeau, and became a great admirer of the French Revolution. He left freethinking writings among his remains. They are not described by Noack, and I have been unable to meet with them.

[7] It was a test of the depth of the freethinking spirit in the men of the day. Semler justified the edict; Bahrdt vehemently denounced it. Hagenbach, i, 372.

Many minds of the period, doubtless, are typified by HERDER, who, though a practising clergyman, was clearly a Spinozistic theist, accommodating himself to popular Christianity in a genially latitudinarian spirit.[1] When in his youth he published an essay discussing Genesis as a piece of oriental poetry, not to be treated as science or theology, he evoked an amount of hostility which startled him.[2] Learning his lesson, he was for the future guarded enough to escape persecution. He was led by his own temperamental bias, however, to a transcendental position in philosophy. Originally in agreement with Kant,[3] as against the current metaphysic, in the period before the issue of the latter's *Critique of Pure Reason*, he nourished his religious instincts by a discursive reading of history, which he handled in a comparatively scientific yet above all poetic or theosophic spirit, while Kant, who had little or no interest in history, developed his thought on the side of physical science.[4] The philosophic methods of the two men thus became opposed; and when Herder found Kant's philosophy producing a strongly rationalistic cast of thought among the divinity students who came before him for examination, he directly and sharply antagonized it[5] in a theistic sense. Yet his own influence on his age was on the whole latitudinarian and anti-theological; he opposed to the apriorism of Kant the view that the concepts of space and time are the results of experience and an abstraction of its contents; his historic studies had developed in him a conception of the process of evolution alike in life, opinion, and faculty; and orthodoxy and philosophy alike incline to rank him as a pantheist.[6]

19. Meanwhile, the drift of the age of *Aufklärung* was apparent in the practically freethinking attitude of the two foremost men of letters in the new Germany—GOETHE and SCHILLER. Of the former, despite the bluster of Carlyle, and despite the æsthetic favour shown to Christianity in *Wilhelm Meister*, no religious ingenuity can make more than a pantheist,[7] who, insofar as he

[1] Cp. Crabb Robinson's *Diary*, iii, 48; Martineau, *Study of Spinoza*, p. 328; Willis, *Spinoza*, pp. 162–68. Bishop Hurst laments (*Hist. of Rationalism*, 3rd ed. p. 145) that Herder's early views as to the mission of Christ "were, in common with many other evangelical views, doomed to an unhappy obscuration upon the advance of his later years by frequent intercourse with more skeptical minds."

[2] On the clerical opposition to him at Weimar on this score see Düntzer, *Life of Goethe*, Eng. tr. 1883, i, 317.

[3] Cp. Kronenberg, *Herder's Philosophie nach ihrem Entwickelungsgang*, 1889.

[4] Kronenberg, p. 90.

[5] Stuckenberg, *Life of Immanuel Kant*, 1882, pp. 381–87; Kronenberg, *Herder's Philosophie*, pp. 91, 103.

[6] Kahnis, p. 78, and Erdmann, as there cited. Erdmann finds the pantheism of Herder to be, not Spinozistic as he supposed, but akin to that of Bruno and his Italian successors.

[7] The chief sample passages in his works are the poem *Das Göttliche* and the speech of Faust in reply to Gretchen in the garden scene. It was the surmised pantheism of Goethe's poem *Prometheus* that, according to Jacobi, drew from Lessing *his* avowal of a pantheistic leaning. The poem has even an atheistic ring; but we have Goethe's own

touched on Biblical questions, copied the half-grown rationalism of the school of Semler.[1] "The great Pagan" was the common label among his orthodox or conformist contemporaries.[2] As a boy, learning a little Hebrew, he was already at the critical point of view in regard to Biblical marvels,[3] though he never became a scientific critic. He has told how, in his youth, when Lavater insisted that he must choose between orthodox Christianity and atheism, he answered that, if he were not free to be a Christian in his own way *(wie ich es bisher gehegt hätte)*, he would as soon turn atheist as Christian, the more so as he saw that nobody knew very well what either signified.[4] As he puts it, he had made a Christ and a Christianity of his own.[5] His admired friend Fräulein von Klettenberg, the "Beautiful Soul" of one of his pieces, told him that he never satisfied her when he used the Christian terminology, which he never seemed to get right; and he tells how he gradually turned away from her religion, which he had for a time approached, in its Moravian aspect, with a too passionate zeal.[6] In his letters to Lavater, he wrote quite explicitly that a voice from heaven would not make him believe in a virgin birth and a resurrection, such tales being for him rather blasphemies against the great God and his revelation in Nature. Thousands of pages of earlier and later writings, he declared, were for him as beautiful as the gospel.[7] Nor did he ever yield to the Christian Church more than a Platonic amity; so that much of the peculiar hostility that was long felt for his poetry and was long shown to his memory in Germany is to be explained as an expression of the normal malice of pietism against unbelievers.[8] Such utterances as the avowal that he revered Jesus as he revered the Sun,[9] and the other to the effect that Christianity has nothing to do with philosophy, where Hegel sought to bring it—that it is simply a beneficent influence, and is not to be looked to for proof of immortality[10]—are clearly not those of a believer. To-day belief is glad to claim Goethe as a friend in respect of his many concessions to it, as well as of his occasional flings at more

account of the influence of Spinoza on him from his youth onwards (*Wahrheit und Dichtung*, Th. III, B. xiv; Th. IV, B. xvi). See also his remarks on the "natural" religion of "conviction" or rational inference, and that of "faith" (*Glaube*) or revelationism, in B. iv (*Werke*, ed. 1866, xi, 134); also Kestner's account of his opinions at twenty-three, in Düntzer's *Life*, Eng. tr. i, 185; and again his letter to Jacobi, January 6, 1813, quoted by Düntzer, ii, 290.

[1] See the *Alt-Testamentliches* Appendix to the *West-Oestlicher Divan*.
[2] Heine, *Zur Gesch. der Rel. u. Phil. in Deutschland* (*Werke*, ed. 1876, iii, 92).
[3] *Wahrheit und Dichtung*, Th. I, B. iv (*Werke*, ed. 1886, xi, 123).
[4] *Id.* Th. III, B. xiv, par. 20 (*Werke*, xii, 159).
[5] *Id.* pp. 165, 186.
[6] *Id.* p. 184.
[7] Cited by Baur, *Gesch. der christl. Kirche*, v, 50.
[8] Compare, as to the hostility he aroused, Düntzer, i, 152, 317, 329-30, 451; ii, 291 *note*, 455, 461; Eckermann, *Gespräche mit Goethe*, März 6, 1830; and Heine, last cit. p. 93.
[9] Eckermann, März 11, 1832.
[10] *Id.* Feb. 4, 1829.

consistent freethinkers. But a "great pagan" he remains for the student. In the opinion of later orthodoxy his "influence on religion was very pernicious."[1] He indeed showed small concern for religious susceptibilities when he humorously wrote that from his youth up he believed himself to stand so well with his God as to fancy that he might even "have something to forgive Him."[2]

One passage in Goethe's essay on the Pentateuch, appended to the *West-Oestlicher Divan*, is worth noting here as illustrating the ability of genius to cherish and propagate historical fallacies. It runs: "The peculiar, unique, and deepest theme of the history of the world and man, to which all others are subordinate, is always the conflict of belief and unbelief. All epochs in which belief rules, under whatever form, are illustrious, inspiriting, and fruitful for that time and the future. All epochs, on the other hand, in which unbelief, in whatever form, secures a miserable victory, even though for a moment they may flaunt it proudly, disappear for posterity, because no man willingly troubles himself with knowledge of the unfruitful" (first ed. pp. 424–25). Goethe goes on to speak of the four latter books of Moses as occupied with the theme of unbelief, and of the first as occupied with belief. Thus his formula was based, to begin with, on purely fabulous history, into the nature of which his poetic faculty gave him no true insight. (See his idyllic recast of the patriarchal history in Th. I, B. iv of the *Wahrheit und Dichtung*.) Applied to real history, his formula has no validity save on a definition which implies either an equivoque or an argument in a circle. If it refer, in the natural sense, to epochs in which any given religion is widely rejected and assailed, it is palpably false. The Renaissance and Goethe's own century were ages of such unbelief; and they remain much more deeply interesting than the Ages of Faith. St. Peter's at Rome is the work of a reputedly unbelieving pope. If on the other hand his formula be meant to apply to belief in the sense of energy and enthusiasm, it is still fallacious. The crusades were manifestations of energy and enthusiasm; but they were profoundly "unfruitful," and they are not deeply interesting. The only sense in which Goethe's formula could stand would be one in which it is recognized that all vigorous intellectual life stands for "belief" —that is to say, that Lucretius and Voltaire, Paine and d'Holbach, stand for "belief" when confidently attacking beliefs. The formula is thus true only in a strained and non-natural sense; whereas it is sure to be read and to be believed, by thoughtless admirers, in its natural and false

[1] Hurst, *Hist. of Rationalism*, 3rd ed. p. 150.
[2] *Wahrheit und Dichtung*, Th. III, B. viii; *Werke*, xi, 334.

sense, though the whole history of Byzantium and modern Islam is a history of stagnant and unfruitful belief, and that of modern Europe a history of fruitful doubt, disbelief, and denial, involving new affirmations. Goethe's own mind on the subject was in a state of verbalizing confusion, the result or expression of his temperamental aversion to clear analytical thought ("Above all," he boasts, "I never thought about thinking") and his habit of poetic allegory and apriorism. "Logic was invincibly repugnant to him" (Lewes, *Life of Goethe*, 3rd ed. p. 38). The mosaic of his thinking is sufficiently indicated in Lewes's sympathetically confused account (*id.* pp. 523–27). Where he himself doubted and denied current creeds, as in his work in natural science, he was most fruitful[1] (though he was not always right—*e.g.*, his polemic against Newton's theory of colour); and the permanently interesting teaching of his *Faust* is precisely that which artistically utters the doubt through which he passed to a pantheistic Naturalism.

20. No less certain is the unbelief of Schiller (1759–1805), whom Hagenbach even takes as "the representative of the rationalism of his age." In his juvenile *Robbers*, indeed, he makes his worst villains freethinkers; and in the preface he stoutly champions religion against all assailants; but hardly ever after that piece does he give a favourable portrait of a priest.[2] He himself soon joined the *Aufklärung;* and all his æsthetic appreciation of Christianity never carried him beyond the position that it virtually had the tendency (*Anlage*) to the highest and noblest, though that was in general tastelessly and repulsively represented by Christians. He added that in a certain sense it is the only æsthetic religion, whence it is that it gives such pleasure to the feminine nature, and that only among women is it to be met with in a tolerable form.[3] Like Goethe, he sought to reduce the Biblical supernatural to the plane of possibility,[4] in the manner of the liberal theologians of the period; and like him he often writes as a deist,[5] though professedly for a time a Kantist. On the other hand, he does not hesitate to say that a healthy nature (which Goethe had said needed no morality, no *Natur-recht*,[6] and no political metaphysic) required neither deity nor immortality to sustain it.[7]

[1] Cp., however, the estimate of Krause, above, p. 207. Virchow, *Göthe als Naturforscher*, 1861, goes into detail on the biological points, without reaching any general estimate.
[2] Remarked by Hagenbach, tr. p. 238.
[3] Letter to Goethe, August 17, 1795 (*Briefwechsel*, No. 87). The passage is given in Carlyle's essay on Schiller. [4] In *Die Sendung Moses*. [5] See the *Philosophische Briefe*.
[6] Carlyle translates, "No Rights of Man," which was probably the idea.
[7] Letter to Goethe, July 9, 1796 (*Briefwechsel*, No. 188). "It is evident that he was estranged not only from the church but from the fundamental truths of Christianity" (Rev. W. Baur, *Religious Life of Germany*, Eng. tr. 1872, p. 22). F. C. Baur has a curious

21. The critical philosophy of IMMANUEL KANT (1724–1804) may be said to represent most comprehensively the outcome in German intelligence of the higher freethought of the age, insofar as its results could be at all widely assimilated. In its most truly critical part, the analytic treatment of previous theistic systems in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), he is fundamentally anti-theological; the effect of the argument being to negate all previously current proofs of the existence and cognizableness of a "supreme power" or deity. Already the metaphysics of the Leibnitz-Wolff school were discredited;[1] and so far Kant could count on a fair hearing for a system which rejected that of the schools. Certainly he meant his book to be an antidote to the prevailing religious credulity. "Henceforth there were to be no more dreams of ghost-seers, metaphysicians, and enthusiasts."[2] On his own part, however, no doubt in sympathy with the attitude of many of his readers, there followed a species of intuitional reaction. In his short essay *What is Freethinking?*[3] (1784) he defines *Aufklärung* or freethinking as "the advance of men from their self-imputed minority"; and "minority" as the inability to use one's own understanding without another's guidance. "*Sapere aude;* dare to use thine own understanding," he declares to be the motto of freethought: and he dwells on the laziness of spirit which keeps men in the state of minority, letting others do their thinking for them as the doctor prescribes their medicine. In this spirit he justifies the movement of rational criticism while insisting, justly enough, that men have still far to go ere they can reason soundly in all things. If, he observes, "we ask whether we live in an enlightened (*aufgeklärt*) age the answer is, No, but in an age of enlightening (*aufklärung*)." There is still great lack of capacity among men in general to think for themselves, free of leading-strings. "Only slowly can a community (*Publikum*) attain to freethinking." But he repeats that "the age is the age of *aufklärung*, the age of Frederick the Great": and he pays a high tribute to the king who repudiated even the arrogant pretence of "toleration," and alone among monarchs said to his subjects, "Reason as you will; only obey!"

But the element of apprehension gained ground in the aging

page in which he seeks to show that, though Schiller and Goethe cannot be called Christian in a natural sense, the age was not made un-Christian by them to such an extent as is commonly supposed (*Gesch. der christl. Kirche*, v, 46).

[1] Cp. Tieftrunk, as cited by Stuckenberg, *Life of Immanuel Kant*, p. 225.

[2] *Id.* p. 376. In his early essay *Träume eines Geistersehers, erläutert durch Träume der Metaphysik* (1766) this attitude is clear. It ends with an admiring quotation from Voltaire's *Candide*.

[3] *Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?* in the *Berliner Monatschrift*, Dec. 1784, rep. in Kant's *Vorzügliche kleine Schriften*, 1833, Bd. i.

freethinker. In 1787 appeared the second edition of the *Critique*, with a preface avowing sympathy with religious as against free-thinking tendencies; and in the *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788) he makes an almost avowedly unscientific attempt to restore the reign of theism on a basis of a mere emotional and ethical necessity assumed to exist in human nature—a necessity which he never even attempts to demonstrate. With the magic wand of the Practical Reason, as Heine has it, be reanimated the corpse of theism, which the Theoretic Reason had slain.[1] In this adjustment he was perhaps consciously copying Rousseau, who had greatly influenced him,[2] and whose theism is an avowedly subjectivist predication. But the same attitude to the problem had been substantially adopted by Lessing;[3] and indeed the process is at bottom identical with that of the quasi-skeptics, Pascal, Huet, Berkeley, and the rest, who at once impugn and employ the rational process, reasoning that reason is not reasonable. Kant did but set up the "practical" against the "pure" reason, as other theists before him had set up faith against science, or the "heart" against the "head," and as theists to-day exalt the "will" against "knowledge," the emotional nature against the logical. It is tolerably clear that Kant's motive at this stage was an unphilosophic fear that Naturalism would work moral harm[4]—a fear shared by him with the mass of the average minds of his age.

The same motive and purpose are clearly at work in his treatise on *Religion within the bounds of Pure* [*i.e. Mere*] *Reason* (1792–1794), where, while insisting on the purely ethical and rational character of true religion, he painfully elaborates reasons for continuing to use the Bible (concerning which he contends that, in view of its practically "godly" contents, no one can deny the *possibility* of its being held as a revelation) as "the basis of ecclesiastical instruction" no less than a means of swaying the populace.[5] Miracles, he in effect avows, are not true; still, there must be no carping criticism of the miracle stories, which serve a good end. There is to be no persecution; but there is to be no such open disputation as would provoke it.[6] Again and again, with a visible uneasiness, the writer

[1] For an able argument vindicating the unity of Kant's system, however, see Prof. Adamson, *The Philosophy of Kant*, 1879, p. 21 *sq.*, as against Lange. With the verdict in the text compare that of Heine, *Zur Gesch. der Relig. u. Philos. in Deutschland*, B. iii (*Werke*, as cited, iii, 81–82); that of Prof. G. Santayana, *The Life of Reason*, vol. i, 1905, p. 94 *sq.*; and that of Prof. A. Seth Pringle-Pattison, *The Philosophy of Religion in Kant and Hegel*, rep. in vol. entitled *The Philosophical Radicals and Other Essays*, 1907, pp. 264, 266.

[2] Stuckenberg, pp. 225, 332.

[3] Cp. Haym, *Herder nach seinem Leben.....dargestellt*, 1877, i, 33, 48; Kronenberg, *Herder's Philosophie*, p. 10.

[4] Cp. Hagenbach, Eng. tr. p. 223.

[5] *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*, Stück iii, Abth. i, § 5; Abth. ii (ed. 1793, pp. 145–46, 188–89).

[6] Work cited, Stück ii, Abschn. ii, Allg. Anm. p. 108 *sq.*

returns to the thesis that even "revealed" religion cannot do without sacred books which are partly untrue.[1] The doctrine of the Trinity he laboriously metamorphosed, as so many had done before him, and as Coleridge and Hegel did after him, into a formula of three *modes* or aspects of the moral deity[2] which his ethical purpose required. And all this divagation from the plain path of Truth is justified in the interest of Goodness.

All the while the book is from beginning to end profoundly divided against itself. It indicates disbelief in every one of the standing Christian dogmas—Creation, Fall, Salvation, Miracles, and the supernatural basis of morals. The first paragraph of the preface insists that morality is founded on the free reason, and that it needs no religion to aid it. Again and again this note is sounded. "The pure religious faith is that alone which can serve as basis for a universal Church; because it is a pure reason-faith, in which everyone can participate."[3] But without the slightest attempt at justification there is thrown in the formula that "no religion is thinkable without belief in a future life."[4] Thus heaven and hell[5] and Bible and church are arbitrarily imposed on the "pure religion" for the comfort of unbelieving clergymen and the moralizing of life. Error is to cast out error, and evil, evil.

> The process of Kant's adjustment of his philosophy to social needs as he regarded them is to be understood by following the chronology and the vogue of his writings. The first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* "excited little attention" (Stuckenberg, *Life of Kant*, p. 368); but in 1787 appeared the second and modified edition, with a new preface, clearly written with a propitiatory eye to the orthodox reaction. "All at once the work now became popular, and the praise was as loud and as fulsome as at first the silence had been profound. The literature of the day began to teem with Kantian ideas, with discussions of the new philosophy, and with the praises of its author..... High officials in Berlin would lay aside the weighty affairs of State to consider the *Kritik*, and among them were found warm admirers of the work and its author." *Id.* p. 369. Cp. Heine, *Rel. und Phil. in Deutschland*, B. iii—*Werke*, iii, 75, 82.

[1] *E.g.* Stück iv, Th. i, preamble (p. 221, ed. cited).

[2] *Id.* Stück iii, Abth. ii, Allg. Anm.: "This belief," he avows frankly enough, "involves no mystery" (p. 199). In a note to the second edition he suggests that there must be a basis in reason for the idea of a Trinity, found as it is among so many ancient and primitive peoples. The speculation is in itself evasive, for he does not give the slightest reason for thinking the Goths capable of such metaphysic.

[3] Stück iii, Abth. i, § 5; pp. 137, 139.

[4] Stück iii, Abth. ii, p. 178.

[5] Kant explicitly concurs in Warburton's thesis that the Jewish lawgiver purposely omitted all mention of a future state from the Pentateuch; since such belief must be supposed to have been current in Jewry. But he goes further, and pronounces that simple Judaism contains "absolutely no religious belief." To this complexion can philosophic compromise come.

This popularity becomes intelligible in the light of the new edition and its preface. To say nothing of the alterations in the text, pronounced by Schopenhauer to be cowardly accommodations (as to which question see Adamson, as cited, and Stuckenberg, p. 461, *note* 94), Kant writes in the preface that he had been "obliged to destroy knowledge in order to make room for faith"; and, again, that "only through criticism can the roots be cut of materialism, fatalism, atheism, freethinking unbelief (*freigeisterischen Unglauben*), fanaticism and superstition, which may become universally injurious; also of idealism and skepticism, which are dangerous rather to the Schools, and can hardly reach the general public." (Meiklejohn mistranslates: "which *are* universally injurious"—Bohn ed. p. xxxvii.) This passage virtually puts the popular religion and all philosophies save Kant's own on one level of moral dubiety. It is, however, distinctly uncandid as regards the "freethinking unbelief," for Kant himself was certainly an unbeliever in Christian miracles and dogmas.

His readiness to make an appeal to prejudice appears again in the second edition of the *Critique* when he asks: "Whence does the freethinker derive his knowledge that there is, for instance, no Supreme Being?" (*Kritik der reinen Vernunft, Transc. Methodenlehre*, 1 H. 2 Absch. ed. Kirchmann, 1879, p. 587; Bohn tr. p. 458.) He had just before professed to be dealing with denial of the "existence of God"—a proposition of no significance whatever unless "God" be defined. He now without warning substitutes the still more undefined expression "Supreme Being" for "God," thus imputing a proposition probably never sustained with clear verbal purpose by any human being. Either, then, Kant's own proposition was the entirely vacuous one that nobody can demonstrate the impossibility of an alleged *undefined* existence, or he was virtually asserting that no one can disprove *any* alleged supernatural existence—spirit, demon, Moloch, Krishna, Bel, Siva, Aphrodite, or Isis and Osiris. In the latter case he would be absolutely stultifying his own claim to cut the roots of "superstition" and "fanaticism" as well as of freethinking and materialism; for, if the freethinker cannot disprove Jehovah, neither can the Kantist disprove Allah and Satan; and Kant had no basis for denying, as he did with Spinoza, the existence of ghosts or spirits. From this dilemma Kant's argument cannot be delivered. And as he finally introduces deity as a psychologically and morally necessary regulative idea, howbeit indemonstrable, he leaves every species of superstition exactly where it stood before—every superstition being practically held, as against "freethinking unbelief," on just such a tenure.

If he could thus react against freethinking before 1789, he must needs carry the reaction further after the outbreak of the

French Revolution; and his *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft* (1792–1794) is a systematic effort to draw the teeth of the *Aufklärung*, modified only by his resentment of the tyranny of the political authority towards himself. Concerning the age-long opposition between rationalism (*Verstandesaufklärung*) and intuitionism or emotionalism (*Gefühlsphilosophie*), it is claimed by modern transcendentalists that Kant, or Herder, or another, has effected a solution on a plane higher than either. (*E.g.* Kronenberg, *Herder's Philosophie*, 1889, p. 6.) The true solution certainly must account for both points of view—no very difficult matter; but no solution is really attained by either of these writers. Kant alternately stood at the two positions; and his unhistorical mind did not seek to unify them in a study of human evolution. For popular purposes he let pass the assumption that a cosmic emotion is a clue to the nature of the cosmos, as the water-finder's hazel-twig is said to point to the whereabouts of water. Herder, recognisant of evolution, would not follow out any rational analysis.

All the while, however, Kant's theism was radically irreconcilable with the prevailing religion. As appears from his cordial hostility to the belief in ghosts, he really lacked the religious temperament. "He himself," says a recent biographer, "was too suspicious of the emotions to desire to inspire any enthusiasm with reference to his own heart."[1] This misstates the fact that his "Practical Reason" was but an abstraction of his own emotional predilection; but it remains true that that predilection was nearly free from the commoner forms of pious psychosis; and typical Christians have never found him satisfactory. "From my heart," writes one of his first biographers, "I wish that Kant had not regarded the Christian religion merely as a necessity for the State, or as an institution to be tolerated for the sake of the weak (which now so many, following his example, do even in the pulpit), but had known that which is positive, improving, and blessed in Christianity."[2] He had in fact never kept up any theological study;[3] and his plan of compromise had thus, like those of Spencer and Mill in a later day, a fatal unreality for all men who have discarded theology with a full knowledge of its structure, though it appeals very conveniently to those disposed to retain it as a means of popular influence. All his adaptations, therefore, failed to conciliate the mass of the orthodox; and even after the issue of the second *Critique* (*Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*) he had been the subject of discussion among the reac-

[1] Stuckenberg, *Life of Immanuel Kant*, p. 329.
[2] Borowski, *Darstellung des Lebens und Charakters Immanuel Kant's*, 1804, cited by Stuckenberg, p. 357.
[3] Stuckenberg, pp. 359–60.

tionists.[1] But that *Critique*, and the preface to the second edition of the first, were at bottom only pleas for a revised ethic, Kant's concern with current religion being solely ethical;[2] and the force of that concern led him at length, in what was schemed as a series of magazine articles,[3] to expound his notion of religion in relation to morals. When he did so he aroused a resentment much more energetic than that felt by the older academics against his philosophy. The title of his complete treatise, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, is obviously framed to parry criticism; yet so drastic is its treatment of its problems that the College of Censors at Berlin under the new theological régime vetoed the second part. By the terms of the law as to the censorship, the publisher was entitled to know the reason for the decision; but on his asking for it he was informed that "another instruction was on hand, which the censor followed as his law, but whose contents he refused to make known."[4] Greatly incensed, Kant submitted the rejected article with the rest of his book to the theological faculty of his own university of Königsberg, asking them to decide in which faculty the censorship was properly vested. They referred the decision to the philosophical faculty, which duly proceeded to license the book (1793). As completed, it contained passages markedly hostile to the Church. His opponents in turn were now so enraged that they procured a royal cabinet order (October, 1794) charging him with "distorting and degrading many of the chief and fundamental doctrines of the Holy Scriptures and of Christianity," and ordering all the instructors at the university not to lecture on the book.[5] Such was the reward for a capitulation of philosophy to the philosophic ideals of the police.

Kant, called upon to render an account of his conduct to the Government, formally defended it, but in conclusion decorously said: "I think it safest, in order to obviate the least suspicion in this respect, as your Royal Majesty's most faithful subject, to declare solemnly that henceforth I will refrain altogether from all public discussion of religion, whether natural or revealed, both in lectures and in writings." After the death of Frederick William II (1797) and the accession of Frederick William III, who suspended the edict of 1788, Kant held himself free to speak out again, and published (1798) an essay on "The Strife of the [University] Faculties," wherein he argued that philosophers should be free to discuss all

[1] Stuckenberg, p. 361. [2] Cp. F. C. Baur, *Gesch. der christl. Kirche*, v, 63-66.
[3] The first, on "Radical Evils," appeared in a Berlin monthly in April, 1792, and was then reprinted separately.
[4] Stuckenberg, p. 361. [5] Ueberweg, ii, 141; Stuckenberg, p. 363.

questions of religion so long as they did not handle Biblical theology as such. The belated protest, however, led to nothing. By this time the philosopher was incapable of further efficient work; and when he died in 1804 the chief manuscript he left, planned as a synthesis of his philosophic teaching, was found to be hopelessly confused.[1]

The attitude, then, in which Kant stood to the reigning religion in his latter years remained fundamentally hostile, from the point of view of believing Christians as distinguished from that of ecclesiastical opportunists. What were for temporizers arguments in defence of didactic deceit, were for sincerer spirits fresh grounds for recoiling from the whole ecclesiastical field. Kant must have made more rebels than compliers by his very doctrine of compliance. Religion was for him essentially ethic; and there is no reconciling the process of propitiation of deity, in the Christian or any other cult, with his express declaration that all attempts to win God's favour save by simple right-living are sheer fetichism.[2] He thus ends practically at the point of view of the deists, whose influence on him in early life is seen in his work on cosmogony.[3] He had, moreover, long ceased to go to church or follow any religious usage, even refusing to attend the services on the installation of a new university rector, save when he himself held the office. At the close of his treatise on religion, after all his anxious accommodations, he becomes almost violent in his repudiations of sacerdotalism and sectarian self-esteem. "He did not like the singing in the churches, and pronounced it mere bawling. In prayer, whether public or private, he had not the least faith; and in his conversation as well as his writings he treated it as a superstition, holding that to address anything unseen would open the way for fanaticism. Not only did he argue against prayer; he also ridiculed it, and declared that a man would be ashamed to be caught by another in the attitude of prayer." One of his maxims was that "To kneel or prostrate himself on the earth, even for the purpose of symbolizing to himself reverence for a heavenly object, is unworthy of man."[4] So too he held that the doctrine of the Trinity had no practical value, and he had a "low opinion" of the Old Testament.

Yet his effort at compromise had carried him to positions which are the negation of some of his own most emphatic ethical teachings. Like Plato, he is finally occupied in discussing the "right fictions"

[1] Stuckenberg, pp. 304–309.
[2] *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*, Stück iv, Th. 2.
[3] Cp. Stuckenberg, p. 332; Seth Pringle-Pattison, as cited.
[4] Stuckenberg, pp. 340, 346, 354, 468.

for didactic purposes. Swerving from thoroughgoing freethought for fear of moral harm, he ends by sacrificing intellectual morality to what seems to him social security. His doctrine, borrowed from Lessing, of a "conceivable" revelation which told man only what he could find out for himself, is a mere flout to reason. While he carries his "categorical imperative," or à priori conception of duty, so extravagantly far as to argue that it is wrong even to tell a falsehood to a would-be murderer in order to mislead him, he approves of the systematic employment of the pulpit function by men who do not believe in the creed they there expound. The priest, with Kant's encouragement, is to "draw all the practical lessons for his congregation from dogmas which he himself cannot subscribe with a full conviction of their truth, but which he can teach, since it is not altogether impossible that truth may be concealed therein," while he remains free as a scholar to write in a contrary sense in his own name. And this doctrine, set forth in the censured work of 1793, is repeated in the moralist's last treatise (1798), wherein he explains that the preacher, when speaking doctrinally, "can put into the passage under consideration his own rational views, whether found there or not." Kant thus ended by reviving for the convenience of churchmen, in a worse form, the medieval principle of a "twofold truth." So little efficacy is there in a transcendental ethic for any of the actual emergencies of life.

On this question compare Kant's *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*, Stück iii, Abth. i, § 6; Stück iv, Th. ii, preamble and §§ i, 3, and 4; with the essay *Ueber ein vermeintes Recht aus Menschenliebe zu lügen* (1797), in reply to Constant—rep. in Kant's *Vorzügliche kleine Schriften*, 1833, Bd. ii, and in App. to Rosenkranz's ed. of *Werke*, vii, 295—given by T. K. Abbott in his tr. of the *Critique of Judgment*. See also Stuckenberg, pp. 341–45, and the general comment of Baur, *Kirchengeschichte des 19ten Jahrhunderts*, 1862, p. 65. "Kant's recognition of Scripture is purely a matter of expedience. The State needs the Bible to control the people; the masses need it in order that they, having weak consciences, may recognize their duty; and the philosopher finds it a convenient vehicle for conveying to the people the faith of reason. Were it rejected it might be difficult, if not impossible, to put in its place another book which would inspire as much confidence." All the while "Kant's principles of course led him to deny that the Bible is authoritative in matters of religion, or that it is of itself a safe guide in morals.....Its value consists in the fact that, owing to the confidence of the people in it, reason can use it to interpret into Scripture its own doctrines, and can thus

make it the means of popularizing rational faith. If anyone imagines that the aim of the interpretation is to obtain the real meaning of Scripture, he is no Kantian on this point" (Stuckenberg, p. 341).

22. The total performance of Kant thus left Germany with a powerful lead on the one hand towards that unbelief in religion which in the last reign had been fashionable, and on the other hand a series of prescriptions for compromise; the monarchy all the while throwing its weight against all innovation in doctrine and practice. In 1799 Fichte is found expressing the utmost alarm at the combination of the European despotisms to "rout out freethought";[1] and so strong did the official reaction become that in the opinion of Heine all the German philosophers and their ideas would have been suppressed by wheel and gallows but for Napoleon,[2] who intervened in the year 1805. The Prussian despotism being thus weakened, what actually happened was an adaptation of Kant's teaching to the needs alike of religion and of rationalism. The religious world was assured by it that, though all previous arguments for theism were philosophically worthless, theism was now safe on the fluid basis of feeling. On the other hand, rationalism alike in ethics and in historical criticism was visibly reinforced on all sides. Herder, as before noted, found divinity students grounding their unbelief on Kant's teaching. Staüdlin begins the preface to his *History and Spirit of Skepticism* (1794) with the remark that "Skepticism begins to be a disease of the age"; and Kant is the last in his list of skeptics. At the close of the century "the number of Kantian theologians was legion," and it was through the Kantian influence that "the various anti-orthodox tendencies which flourished during the period of Illumination were concentrated in Rationalism"[3]—in the tendency, that is, to bring rational criticism to bear alike on history, dogma, and philosophy. Borowski in 1804 complains that "beardless youths and idle babblers" devoid of knowledge "appeal to Kant's views respecting Christianity."[4] These views, as we have seen, were partly accommodating, partly subversive in the extreme. Kant regards Jesus as an edifying ideal of perfect manhood, "belief" in whom as such makes a man acceptable to God, because of following a good model. "While he thus treats the historical account of Jesus as of no significance, except as a shell into which the practical reason puts the kernel, his whole argument tends to destroy faith

[1] Letter of May 22, 1799, reproduced by Heine.
[2] *Zur Gesch. der Rel. u. Philos. in Deutschland.* *Werke*, as cited, iii, 96, 98.
[3] Stuckenberg, p. 311.
[4] *Id.* p. 357.

in the historic person of Jesus as given in the gospel, treating the account itself as something whose truthfulness it is not worth while to investigate."[1] In point of fact we find his devoted disciple Erhard declaring: "I regard Christian morality as something which has been falsely imputed to Christianity; and the existence of Christ does not at all seem to me to be a probable historical fact" —this while declaring that Kant had given him "the indescribable comfort of being able to call himself openly, and with a good conscience, a Christian."[2]

While therefore a multitude of preachers availed themselves of Kant's philosophic licence to rationalize in the pulpit and out of it as occasion offered, and yet others opposed them only on the score that all divergence from orthodoxy should be avowed, the dissolution of orthodoxy in Germany was rapid and general; and the anti-supernaturalist handling of Scripture, prepared for as we have seen, went on continuously. Even the positive disparagement of Christianity was carried on by Kantian students; and Hamann, dubbed "the Magician of the North" for his alluring exposition of emotional theism, caused one of them, a tutor, to be brought before a clerical consistory for having taught his pupil to throw all specifically Christian doctrines aside. The tutor admitted the charge, and with four others signed a declaration "that neither morality nor sound reason nor public welfare could exist in connection with Christianity."[3] Hamann's own influence was too much a matter of literary talent and caprice to be durable; and recent attempts to re-establish his reputation have evoked the deliberate judgment that he has no permanent importance.[4]

Against the intellectual influence thus set up by Kant there was none in contemporary Germany capable of resistance. Philosophy for the most part went in Kant's direction, having indeed been so tending before his day. Rationalism of a kind had already had a representative in Chr. A. Crusius (1712–1775), who in treatises on logic and metaphysics opposed alike Leibnitz and Wolff, and taught for his own part a kind of Epicureanism, nominally Christianized. To his school belonged Platner (much admired by Jean Paul Richter, his pupil) and Tetens, "the German Locke," who attempted a common-sense answer to Hume. His ideal was a philosophy "at once intelligible and religious, agreeable to God and accessible to the

[1] Stuckenberg, p. 351. "It is only necessary," adds Stuckenberg (p. 468, *note* 142), "to develop Kant's hints in order to get the views of Strauss in his *Leben Jesu*."
[2] *Id.* p. 375. Erhard stated that Pestalozzi shared his views on Christian ethics.
[3] Stuckenberg, p. 358.
[4] Cp. Weber, *Gesch. der deutschen Literatur*, 11te Aufl. p. 119; R. Unger, *Hamann und die Aufklärung*, 1911.

charges of atheism brought against him were purely malicious.[1] But his career henceforth was one of strife and friction, first with the student-blackguardism which had been rife in the German universities ever since the Thirty Years' War, and which he partly subdued; then with the academic authorities and the traditionalists, who, when he began lecturing on Sunday mornings, accused him of attempting to throw over Christianity and set up the worship of reason. He was arraigned before the High Consistory of Weimar and acquitted; but his wife was insulted in the streets of Jena; his house was riotously attacked in the night; and he ceased to reside there. Then, in his *Wissenschaftslehre* ("Doctrine of Knowledge," 1794–95) he came into conflict with the Kantians, with whom his rupture steadily deepened on ethical grounds. Again he was accused of atheism in print; and after a defence in which he retorted the charge on the utilitarian theists he resigned.

In Berlin, where the new king held the old view that the wrongs of the Gods were the Gods' affair, he found harbourage; and sought to put himself right with the religious world by his book *Die Bestimmung des Menschen* ("The Vocation of Man," 1800), wherein he speaks of the Eternal Infinite Will as regulating human reason so far as human reason is right—the old counter-sense and the old evasion. By this book he repelled his rationalistic friends Schelling and the Schlegels; while his religious ally Schleiermacher, who chose another tactic, wrote on it a bitter and contemptuous review, and "could hardly find words strong enough to express his detestation of it."[2] A few years later Fichte was writing no less contemptuously of Schelling; and in his remaining years, though the Napoleonic wars partly brought him into sympathy with his countrymen, from whom he had turned away in angry alienation, he remained a philosophic Ishmael, warring and warred upon all round. He was thus left to figure for posterity as a religionist "for his own hand," who rejected all current religion while angrily dismissing current unbelief as "freethinking chatter."[3] If his philosophy be estimated by its logical content as distinguished from its conflicting verbalisms, it is fundamentally as atheistic as that of Spinoza.[4] That he was conscious of a vital sunderance between his

[1] Cp. Robins, *A Defence of the Faith*, 1862, pt. i, pp. 132–33; Adamson, *Fichte*, pp. 50–67; W. Smith, *Memoir of Fichte*, pp. 106–107.

[2] Adamson, pp. 71, 73.

[3] *Grundzüge des gegenwärtigen Zeitalters*, 16te Vorles. ed. 1806, pp. 509–510.

[4] Compare the complaints of Hurst, *Hist. of Rationalism*, 3rd ed. pp. 136–37, and of Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, Bohn ed. p. 72. Fichte's theory, says Coleridge (after praising him as the destroyer of Spinozism), "degenerated into a crude *egoismus*, a boastful and hyperstoic hostility to Nature, as lifeless, godless, and altogether unholy,

thought and that of the past is made clear by his answer, in 1805, to the complaint that the people had lost their "religious feeling" (*Religiosität*). His retort is that a new religious feeling has taken the place of the old;[1] and that was the position taken up by the generation which swore by him, in the German manner, as the last had sworn by Kant.

But the successive philosophies of Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, all rising out of the "Illumination" of the eighteenth century, have been alike impermanent. Nothing is more remarkable in the history of thought than the internecine strife of the systems which insisted on "putting something in the place" of the untenable systems of the past. They have been but so many "toppling spires of cloud." Fichte, like Herder, broke away from the doctrine of Kant; and later became bitterly opposed to that of his former friend Schelling, as did Hegel in his turn. Schleiermacher, hostile to Kant, was still more hostile to Fichte; and Hegel, detesting Schleiermacher[2] and developing Fichte, give rise to schools arrayed against each other, of which the anti-Christian was by far the stronger. All that is permanent in the product of the age of German Rationalism is the fundamental principle upon which it proceeded, the confutation of the dogmas and legends of the past, and the concrete results of the historical, critical, and physical research to which the principle and the confutation led.

24. It is true that the progressive work was not all done by the Rationalists so-called. As always, incoherences in the pioneers led to retorts which made for rectification. One of the errors of bias of the early naturalists, as we have noted, was their tendency to take every religious document as genuine and at bottom trustworthy, provided only that its allegations of miracles were explained away as misinterpretations of natural phenomena. So satisfied were many of them with this inexpensive method that they positively resisted the attempts of supernaturalists, seeking a way out of *their* special dilemma, to rectify the false ascriptions of the documents. Bent solely on one solution, they were oddly blind to evidential considerations which pointed to interpolation, forgery, variety of source, and error of literary tradition; while scholars bent on saving "inspiration" were often ready in some measure for such recognitions. These arrests of insight took place alternately on both sides, in the normal way of intellectual progress by alternate movements.

while his religion consisted in the assumption of a mere *ordo ordinans*, which we were permitted *exotericé* to call God." Heine (as last cited, p. 75) insists that Fichte's Idealism is "more Godless than the crassest Materialism."

[1] *Grundzüge*, as cited, p. 502.

[2] Cp. Seth Pringle-Pattison, as cited, p. 280, *note*.

All the while, it is the same primary force of reason that sets up the alternate pressures, and the secondary pressures are generated by, and are impossible without, the first.

25. The emancipation, too, was limited in area in the German-speaking world. In Austria, despite a certain amount of French culture, the rule of the Jesuits in the eighteenth century was too effective to permit of any intellectual developments. Maria Theresa, who knew too well that the boundless sexual licence against which she fought had nothing to do with innovating ideas, had to issue a special order to permit the importation of Montesquieu's *Esprit des Lois ;* and works of more subversive doctrine could not openly pass the frontiers at all. An attempt to bring Lessing to Vienna in 1774, with a view to founding a new literary Academy, collapsed before the opposition ; and when Prof. Jahn, of the Vienna University—described as "freethinking, latitudinarian, anti-supernaturalistic"—developed somewhat anti-clerical tendencies in his teaching and writing, he was forced to resign, and died a simple Canon.[1] The Emperor Joseph II in his day passed for an unbeliever ;[2] but there was no general movement. "Austria, in a time of universal effervescence, produced only musicians, and showed zest only for pleasure."[3] Yet among the music-makers was the German-born BEETHOVEN, the greatest master of his age. Kindred in spirit to Goethe, and much more of a revolutionist than he in all things, Beethoven spent the creative part of his life at Vienna without ceasing to be a freethinker.[4] "Formal religion he apparently had none." He copied out a kind of theistic creed consisting of three ancient formulas : "I am that which is" : "I am all that is, that was, that shall be" : "He is alone by Himself ; and to Him alone do all things owe their being." Beyond this his beliefs did not go. When his friend Moscheles at the end of his arrangement of *Fidelio* wrote : "*Fine*, with God's help," Beethoven added, "O man, help thyself."[5] His reception of the Catholic sacraments *in extremis* was not his act. He had left to mankind a purer and a more lasting gift than either the creeds or the philosophies of his age.

[1] Kurtz, *Hist. of the Chr. Church*, Eng. tr. 1864, ii, 225. Jahn was well in advance of his age in his explanation of Joshua's cosmic miracle as the mistaken literalizing of a flight of poetic phrase. See the passage in his Introduction to the Book of Joshua, cited by Rowland Williams, *The Hebrew Prophets*, ii (1871), 31, note 33.

[2] R. N. Bain, *Gustavus Vasa and his Contemporaries*, 1894, i, 265–68.

[3] A. Sorel, *L'Europe et la révolution française*, i (1885), p. 458.

[4] See articles on Beethoven by Macfarren in *Dictionary of Universal Biography*, and by Grove in the *Dictionary of Music and Musicians*.

[5] Grove, art. cited, ed. 1904, i, 224.

Chapter XIX

FREETHOUGHT IN THE REMAINING EUROPEAN STATES

§ 1. *Holland*

Holland, so notable for relative hospitality to freethinking in the seventeenth century, continued to exhibit it in the eighteenth, though without putting forth much native response. After her desperate wars with Louis XIV, the Dutch State, now monarchically ruled, turned on the intellectual side rather to imitative *belles lettres* than to the problems which had begun to exercise so much of English thought. It was an age of "retrogression and weakness."[1] Elizabeth Wolff, *née* Bekker, one of the most famous of the numerous Dutch women-writers of the century (1738–1804), is notable for her religious as well as for her political liberalism;[2] but her main activity was in novel-writing; and there are few other signs of freethinking tendencies in popular Dutch culture. It was impossible, however, that the influences at work in the neighbouring lands should be shut out; and if Holland did not produce innovating books she printed many throughout the century.

In 1708 there was published at Amsterdam a work under the pseudonym of "Juan di Posos," wherein, by way of a relation of imaginary travels, something like atheism was said to be taught; but the pastor Leenhof had in 1703 been accused of atheism for his treatise, *Heaven on Earth*, which was at most Spinozistic.[3] Even as late as 1714 a Spinozist shoemaker, Booms, was banished for his writings; but henceforth liberal influences, largely traceable to the works of Bayle, begin to predominate. Welcomed by students everywhere, Bayle must have made powerfully for tolerance and rationalism in his adopted country, which after his time became a centre of culture for the States of northern Europe rather than a source of original works. Holland in the eighteenth century was receptive alike of French and English thought and literature,

[1] Jonckbloet, *Beknopte Geschiedenis der nederl. Letterkunde*, ed. 1880, p. 282.
[2] *Id.* pp. 315–16.
[3] Cp. Trinius, *Freydenker-Lexicon*, pp. 336–37; Colerus, *Vie de Spinoza*, as cited, p. lviii.

especially the former;[1] and, besides reprinting many of the French deists' works and translating some of the English, the Dutch cities harboured such heretics as the Italian Alberto Radicati, Count PASSERANO, who, dying at Rotterdam in 1736, left a collection of deistic treatises of a strongly freethinking cast to be posthumously published.

The German traveller Alberti,[2] citing the *London Magazine*, 1732, states that Passerano visited England and published works in English through a translator, Joseph Morgan, and that both were sentenced to imprisonment. This presumably refers to his anonymous *Philosophical Dissertation upon Death*, "by a friend to truth," published in English in 1732.[3] It is a remarkable treatise, being a hardy justification of suicide, "composed for the consolation of the unhappy," from a practically atheistic standpoint. Two years earlier he had published in English, also anonymously, a tract entitled *Christianity set in a True Light, by a Pagan Philosopher newly converted;* and it may be that the startling nature of the second pamphlet elicited a prosecution which included both. The pamphlet of 1730, however, is a eulogy of the ethic of Jesus, who is deistically treated as a simple man, but with all the amenity which the deists usually brought to bear on that theme. Passerano's *Recueil des pièces curieuses sur les matières les plus interessants*, published with his name at Rotterdam in 1736,[4] includes a translation of Swift's ironical *Project* concerning babies, and an *Histoire abregée de la profession sacerdotale*, which was published in a separate English translation.[5] Passerano is noticeable chiefly for the relative thoroughness of his rationalism.[6] In the *Recueil* he speaks of deists and atheists as being the same, those called atheists having always admitted a first cause under the names God, Nature, Eternal Germs, movement, or universal soul.[7]

In 1737 was published in French a small mystification consisting of a *Sermon prêché dans la grande Assemblée des Quakers*

[1] See Texte, *Rousseau and the Cosmopolitan Spirit*, Eng. tr. p. 29.
[2] *Briefe*, 1752, p. 451.
[3] This is the basis of Pope's reference to "illustrious Passeran" in his *Epilogue to the Satires*, 1738, ii, 124. The Rev. J. Bramstone's satire, *The Man of Taste* (1733), spells the name "Pasaran," whence may be inferred the extent of the satirist's knowledge of his topic.
[4] Reprinted, in French, at London in 1749, in a more complete and correct edition, published by J. Brindley.
[5] The copy in the British Museum is dated 1737, and the title-page describes Passerano as "a Piemontæse exile *now in Holland*, a Christian Freethinker." It is presumably a re-issue.
[6] Warburton in a note on Pope (*Epilogue*, as cited) characteristically alleges that Passerano had been banished from Piedmont "for his impieties, and lived in the utmost misery, yet feared to practise his own precepts; and at last died a penitent." The source of these allegations may serve as warrant for disbelieving them. Warburton, it will be observed, says nothing of an imprisonment in England.
[7] London ed. 1749, pp. 24–25.

de Londres, par le fameux Frère E. E., and another little tract, *La Religion Muhamedane comparée à la païenne de l'Indostan, par Ali-Ebn-Omar.* "E. E." stood for Edward Elwall, a well-known Unitarian of the time, who, as we saw, was tried at Stafford Assizes in 1726 for publishing a Unitarian treatise, and who in 1742 published another, entitled *The Supernatural Incarnation of Jesus Christ proved to be false.....and that our Lord Jesus Christ was the real son of Joseph and Mary.* The two tracts are both by Passerano, and are on deistic lines, the text of the *Sermon* being (in English) "The Religion of the Gospel is the true Original Religion of Reason and Nature." The proposition is of course purely ethical in its bearing.

The currency given in Holland to such literature tells of growing liberality of thought as well as of political freedom. But the conditions were not favourable to such general literary activity as prevailed in the larger States, though good work was done in medicine and the natural sciences. Not till the nineteenth century did Dutch scholars again give a lead to Europe in religious thought.

§ 2. *The Scandinavian States*

1. Traces of new rationalistic life are to be seen in the Scandinavian countries at least as early as the times of Descartes. There, as elsewhere, the Reformation had been substantially a fiscal or economic revolution, proceeding on various lines. In Denmark the movement, favoured by the king, began among the people; the nobility rapidly following, to their own great profit; and finally Christian III, who ruled both Denmark and Norway, acting with the nobles, suppressed Catholic worship, and confiscated to the crown the "castles, fortresses, and vast domains of the prelates."[1] In Sweden the king, Gustavus Vasa, took the initiative, moved by sore need of funds, and a thoroughly anti-ecclesiastical temper,[2] the clergy having supported the Danish rule which he threw off. The burghers and peasants promptly joined him against the clergy and nobles, enabling him to confiscate the bishops' castles and estates, as was done in Denmark; and he finally secured himself with the nobles by letting them reclaim lands granted by their ancestors to monasteries.[3] His anti-feudal reforms having stimulated new life in many ways, further evolution followed.

In Sweden the stimulative reign of Gustavus Vasa was followed

[1] Koch, *Histor. View of the European Nations*, Eng. tr. 3rd ed. p. 103. Cp. Crichton and Wheaton, *Scandinavia*, 1837, i, 383–96; Otté, *Scandinavian History*, 1874, pp. 222–24; Villiers, *Essay on the Reformation*, Eng. tr. 1836, p. 105. But cp. Allen, *Histoire de Danemark*, Fr. tr. i, 298–300.

[2] Otté, pp. 232–36; Crichton-Wheaton, i, 398–400; Geijer, *Hist. of the Swedes*, Eng. tr. i, 125.

[3] Koch, p. 104; Geijer, i, 129.

by a long period of the strife which everywhere trod on the heels of the Reformation. The second successor of Gustavus, his son John, had married a daughter of the Catholic Sigismund of Poland, and sought to restore her religion to power, causing much turmoil until her death, whereafter he abandoned the cause. His Catholic son Sigismund recklessly renewed the effort, and was deposed in consequence; John's brother Charles becoming king. In Denmark, meanwhile, Frederick II (d. 1588) had been a bigoted champion of Lutheranism, expelling a professor of Calvinistic leanings on the Eucharist, and refusing a landing to the Calvinists who fled from the Netherlands. On the other hand he patronized and pensioned Tycho Brahé, who, until driven into banishment by a court cabal during the minority of Christian IV, did much for astronomy, though unable to accept Copernicanism.

In 1611 there broke out between Sweden and Denmark the sanguinary two-years' "War of Calmar," their common religion availing nothing to avert strife. Thereafter Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, as Protestant champion in the Thirty Years' War, in succession to Christian IV of Denmark, fills the eye of Europe till his death in 1632; eleven years after which event Sweden and Denmark were again at war. In 1660 the latter country, for lack of goodwill between nobles and commoners, underwent a political revolution whereby its king, whose predecessors had held the crown on an elective tenure, became absolute, and set up a hereditary line. The first result was a marked intellectual stagnation. "Divinity, law, and philosophy were wholly neglected; surgery was practised only by barbers; and when Frederick IV and his queen required medical aid, no native physician could be found to whom it was deemed safe to entrust the cure of the royal patients.....The only name, after Tycho Brahé, of which astronomy can boast, is that of Peter Horrebow, and with him the cultivation of the science became extinct."[1]

2. For long, the only personality making powerfully for culture was HOLBERG,[2] certainly a host in himself. Of all the writers of his age, the only one who can be compared with him in versatility of power is Voltaire, whom he emulated as satirist, dramatist, and historian; but all his dramatic genius could not avail to sustain against the puritanical pietism which then flourished, the Danish

[1] Crichton-Wheaton, ii. 322.

[2] Ludwig Holberg, Baron Holberg, born at Bergen, Norway, 1684. After a youth of poverty and struggle he settled at Copenhagen in 1718, as professor of metaphysics, and attained the chair of eloquence in 1720. Made Baron by King Frederick V of Denmark at his accession in 1747. D. 1754.

drama of which he was the fecund creator. After producing a brilliant series of plays (1722–1727) he had to witness the closing of the Copenhagen Theatre, and take to general writing, historical and didactic. In 1741 he produced in Latin his famous *Subterranean Journey of Nicolas Klimius*,[1] one of the most widely famous performances of its age.[2] He knew English, and must have been influenced by Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, which his story frequently recalls. The hero catastrophically reaches a "subterranean" planet, with another social system, and peopled by moving trees and civilized and socialized animals. With the tree-people, the Potuans, the tale deals at some length, giving a chapter on their religion,[3] after the manner of Tyssot de Patot in *Jacques Massé*. They are simple deists, knowing nothing of Christianity; and the author makes them the mouthpieces of criticisms upon Christian prayers, Te Deums, and hymn-singing in general. They believe in future recompenses, but not in providential government of this life; and at various points they improve upon the current ethic of Christendom.[4]

There is a trace of the tone of Frederick alike in the eulogy of tolerance and in the intimation that anyone who disputes about the character of the deity and the properties of spirits or souls is "condemned to phlebotomy" and to be detained in the general hospital (*nosocomium*).[5] It was probably by way of precaution that in the closing paragraph of the chapter the Potuans are alleged to maintain that, though their creed "seemed mere natural religion, it was all revealed in a book which was sent from the sky some centuries ago"; but the precaution is slight, as they are declared to have practically no dogmas at all. It is thus easy to read between the lines of the declaration of Potuan orthodoxy: "Formerly our ancestors contented themselves to live in natural religion alone; but experience has shown that the mere light of nature does not suffice, and that its precepts are effaced in time by the sloth and negligence of some and the philosophic subtleties of others, so that nothing can arrest freethinking (*libertatem cogitandi*) or keep it within just bounds. Thence came depravation; and therefore it was that God had chosen to give them a written law."[6] Such a confutation of "the error of those who pretend that a revelation is unnecessary" must have given more entertainment to those in

[1] *Nicolai Klimii Iter Subterraneum novam telluris theoriam ac historiam quintæ monarchiæ.....exhibens*, etc. Dr. Gosse, in art. Holberg, *Encyc. Brit.*, makes the mistake of calling the book a poem. It is in Latin prose, with verse passages.

[2] It was published thrice in Danish, ten times in German, thrice in Swedish, thrice in Dutch, thrice in English, twice in French, twice in Russian, and once in Hungarian.

[3] Cap. vi, *De religione gentis Potuanæ*.

[4] Cp. pp. 75–78, ed. 1754.

[5] Cap. vi, p. 69; cp. cap. viii, *De Academia*, p. 101.

[6] *Id.* p. 77.

question than satisfaction to the defenders of the faith. But a general tone of levity and satire, maintained at the expense of various European nations, England included,[1] together with his popularity as a dramatist, saved Holberg from the imputation of heresy. His satire reached and was realized by the cultured few alone: the multitude was quite unaffected; and during the reign of Christian VI all intellectual efforts beyond the reign of science were subjected to rigorous control.[2] As a culture force, Protestantism had failed in the north lands as completely as Catholicism in the south.

3. In Sweden, meantime, there had occurred some reflex of the intellectual renascence. Towards the middle of the seventeenth century there are increasing traces of rationalism at the court of the famous Christina, who already in her youth is found much interested in the objections of "Jews, heathens, and philosophers against Christian doctrine";[3] and her invitation of Descartes to her court (1649) implies that Sweden had been not a little affected by the revulsion of popular thought which followed on the Thirty Years' War in Germany. Christina herself, however, was a remarkable personality, unfeminine, strong-willed, with a vigorous but immature intelligence; and she did much of her early skeptical thinking for herself. In the course of a few years, the new spirit had gone so far as to make church-going matter for open scoffing at the Swedish court;[4] and the Queen's adoption of Romanism, for which she prepared by abdicating the crown, appears to have been by way of revulsion from a state of mind approaching atheism, to which she had been led by her freethinking French physician, Bourdelot, after Descartes's death.[5] It has been confidently asserted that she really cared for neither creed, and embraced Catholicism only by way of conformity for social purposes, retaining her freethinking views.[6] It is certain that she was always unhappy in her Swedish surroundings. But her course may more reasonably be explained as that of a mind which could not rest in deism or face atheism, and sought in Catholicism the sense of anchorage which is craved by temperaments ill-framed for the discipline of reason. The author of the *Histoire des intrigues galantes de la reine Christine de Suède* (1697), who seems to have been one of her suite, insists that while she "loved bigots no more than atheists,"[7] and although her religion had been shaken in

1 He had visited England in his youth.
2 Crichton-Wheaton, ii, 322. On p. 159 a somewhat contrary statement is made, which obscures the facts. Cp. Schlosser, iv, 13, as to Christian's martinet methods.
3 Geijer, i, 324.
4 *Id.* p. 343; Otté, p. 292.
5 Geijer, i, 342. Cp. Ranke, *Hist. of the Popes*, Eng. tr. ed. 1908, ii, 399; iii, 345–46.
6 Crichton-Wheaton, ii, 88–89, and refs.
7 Cp. Ranke, as cited, ii, 407.

her youth by Bourdelot and other freethinkers, she was regular in all Catholic observances; and that once, looking at the portrait of her father, she said he had failed to provide for the safety of his soul, and thanked God for having guided her aright.[1]

Her annotations of Descartes are of little importance; but it is noteworthy that she accorded to his orthodox adherents a declaration that he had "greatly contributed" to her "glorious conversion" to the Catholic faith.[2] Whatever favour she may have shown to liberty of thought in her youth, no important literary results could follow in the then state of Swedish culture, when the studies at even the new colleges were mainly confined to Latin and theology.[3] The German Pufendorf, indeed, by his treatises *On the Law of Nature and Nations* and *On the Duty of Man and Citizen* (published at Lund, where he was professor, in 1672–73), did much to establish the utilitarian and naturalistic tendency in ethics which was at work at the same time in England; but his latent deism had no great influence even in Germany, his Scripture-citing orthodoxy countervailing it, although he argued for a separation of Church and State.[4]

4. That there was, however, in eighteenth-century Sweden a considerable amount of unpublished rationalism may be gathered from the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, himself something of a freethinker in his very supernaturalism. His frequent subacid allusions to those who "regarded Nature instead of the divine," and "thought from science,"[5] tell not merely of much passive opposition to his own prophetic claims (which he avenged by much serene malediction and the allotment of bad quarters in the next world), but of reasoned rejection of all Scriptural claims. Thus in his *Sapientia Angelica de Divina Providentia*[6] (1764) he sets himself[7] to deal with a number of the ways in which "the merely natural man confirms himself in favour of Nature against God" and "comes to the conclusion that religion in itself is nothing, but yet that it is necessary because it serves as a restraint." Among the sources of unbelief specified are ethical revolt alike against the Biblical narratives and against the lack of moral government in the world; the recognition of the success of other religions than the Christian, and of the many

[1] Work cited, pp. 288–89. This writer gives the only intelligible account of the private execution of Christina's secretary, Monaldeschi, by her orders. Monaldeschi had either passed over to other hands some of her letters to him, or kept them so carelessly as to let them be stolen. *Id.* p. 11. For her cruel act she shows no trace of religious or any other remorse. She was, in fact, a neurotic egoist. Cp. Ranke, ii, 394, 405.

[2] Bouillier, *Hist. de la philos. cartés.*, i, 449–50. [3] Geijer, i, 342.

[4] See his treatise, *Of the Nature and Qualification of Religion in Reference to Civil Society*, Eng. tr. by Crull, 1698.

[5] *Heaven and Hell*, 1758, §§ 353, 354, 464. [6] Translated as *The Divine Providence*.

[7] §§ 235–264.

heresies within that; and dissatisfaction with the Christian dogmas. As Swedenborg sojourned much in other countries, he may be describing men other than his countrymen; but it is very unlikely that the larger part of his intercourse with his fellows counted for nothing in this account of contemporary rationalism.

With his odd mixture of scripturalism and innovating dogmatism, Swedenborg disposes of difficulties about Genesis by reducing Adam and Eve to an allegory of the "Most Ancient Church," tranquilly dismissing the orthodox belief by asking, "For who can suppose that the creation of the world could have been as there described?"[1] His own scientific training, which had enabled him to make his notable anticipation of the nebular theory,[2] made it also easy for him to reduce to allegory the text of what he nevertheless insisted on treating as a divine revelation; and his moral sense, active where he felt no perverting resentment of contradiction by reasoners,[3] made him reject the orthodox doctrine of salvation by faith, even as he did the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity. On these points he seems to have had a lead from his father, Bishop Jasper Svedberg,[4] as he had in his overwhelming physiological bias to subjective vision-making. But a message which finally amounted to the oracular propounding of a new and bewildering supernaturalism, to be taken on authority like the old, could make for freethought only by rousing rational reaction. It was Swedenborg's destiny to establish, in virtue of his great power of orderly dogmatism, a new supernaturalist and scripturalist sect, while his scientific conceptions were left for other men to develop. In his own country, in his own day, he had little success *qua* prophet, though always esteemed for his character and his high secular competence; and he finally figured rather as a heresiarch than otherwise.[5]

5. According to one of Swedenborg's biographers, the worldliness of most of the Swedish clergy in the middle of the eighteenth century so far outwent even that of the English Church that the laity were left to themselves; while "gentlemen disdained the least taint of religion, and except on formal occasions would have been ashamed to be caught church-going."[6] But this was a matter rather of fashion than of freethought; and there is little trace of

1 Work cited, § 241.
2 *De cultu et amore Dei*, 1745, tr. as *The Worship and Love of God*, ed. 1885, p. 18.
3 "When he was contradicted he kept silence." *Documents concerning Swedenborg*, ed. by Dr. Tafel, 1875–1877, ii, 564.
4 Cp. Swedenborg's letter to Beyer, in *Documents*, as cited, ii, 279.
5 For many years he seldom went to church, being unable to listen peacefully to the trinitarian doctrine he heard there. *Documents*, as cited, ii, 560.
6 W. White, *Swedenborg: his Life and Writings*, ed. 1867, i, 188.

critical life in the period. In the latter part of the eighteenth century, doubtless, the aristocracies and the cultured class in the Scandinavian States were influenced like the rest of Europe by the spirit of French freethought,[1] which everywhere followed the vogue of the French language and literature. Thus we find Gustavus III of Sweden, an ardent admirer of Voltaire, defending him in company, and proposing in 1770, before the death of his father prevented it, to make a pilgrimage to Ferney.[2] It is without regard to this testimony that Gustavus, who was assassinated, is said to have died "with the fortitude and resignation of a Christian."[3] He was indeed flighty and changeable,[4] and after growing up a Voltairean was turned for a year or two into a credulous mystic, the dupe of pseudo-Swedenborgian charlatans;[5] but there is small sign of religious earnestness in his fashion of making his dying confession.[6] Claiming at an earlier date to believe more than Joseph II, who in his opinion "believed in nothing at all," he makes light of their joint parade of piety at Rome,[7] and seems to have been at bottom a good deal of an indifferentist. During his reign his influence on literature fostered a measure of the spirit of freethought in *belles lettres;* and in the poets J. H. Kjellgren and J. M. Bellman (both d. 1795) there is to be seen the effect of the German *Aufklärung* and the spirit of Voltaire.[8] Their contemporary, Tomas Thoren, who called himself Torild (d. 1812), though more of an innovator in poetic style than in thought, wrote among other things a pamphlet on *The Freedom of the General Intelligence.* But Torild's nickname, "the mad *magister*," tells of his extravagance; and none of the Swedish belletrists of that age amounted to a European influence. Finally, in the calamitous period which followed on the assassination of Gustavus III, all Swedish culture sank heavily. The desperate energies of Charles XII had left his country half-ruined in 1718; and even while Linnæus and his pupils were building up the modern science of botany in the latter half of the century the economic exhaustion of the people was a check on general culture. The University of Upsala, which at one time had over 2,000 students, counted only some 500 at the close of the eighteenth century.[9]

[1] Schweitzer, *Geschichte der skandinavischen Literatur*, ii, 175, 225; C.-F. Allen, *Histoire de Danemark*, Fr. tr. ii, 1900–1901; R. N. Bain, *Gustavus Vasa and his Contemporaries*, 1894, i, 226.

[2] *Correspondance de Grimm*, ed. 1829–1831, vii, 229.

[3] Crichton-Wheaton, ii, 206.

[4] Writing to his mother on his first visit to Paris, he takes her, ostensibly as a *libre esprit*, into his confidence, disparaging Marmontel and Grimm as vain. Joseph II in turn pronounced Gustavus "a conceited fop, an impudent braggart" (Bain, as cited, i, 266). Both monarchs set up an impression of want of balance, and the mother of Gustavus, who forced him to break with her, does the same.

[5] Bain, as cited, i, 224–31.

[6] *Id.* ii, 208–12.

[7] *Id.* i, 267–68.

[8] Cp. Bain, ii, 272, 287, 293–96.

[9] Crichton-Wheaton, ii, 335.

6. In Denmark, on the other hand, the stagnation of nearly a hundred years had been ended at the accession of Frederick V in 1746.[1] National literature, revivified by Holberg, was further advanced by the establishment of a society of polite learning in 1763; under Frederick's auspices Danish naturalists and scholars were sent abroad for study; and in particular a literary expedition was sent to Arabia. The European movement of science, in short, had gripped the little kingdom, and the usual intellectual results began to follow, though, as in Catholic Spain, the forces of reaction soon rallied against a movement which had been imposed from above rather than evolved from within.

The most celebrated northern unbeliever of the French period was Count Struensee, who for some years (1770–72) virtually ruled Denmark as the favourite of the young queen, the king being half-witted and worthless. Struensee was an energetic and capable though injudicious reformer: he abolished torture; emancipated the enslaved peasantry; secured toleration for all sects; encouraged the arts and industry; established freedom of the press; and reformed the finances, the police, the law courts, and sanitation.[2] His very reforms, being made with headlong rapidity, made his position untenable, and his enemies soon effected his downfall and death. The young queen, who was not alleged to have been a freethinker, was savagely seized by the hostile faction and put on her trial on a charge of adultery, which being wholly unproved, the aristocratic faction proposed to try her on a charge of drugging her husband. Only by the efforts of the British court was she saved from imprisonment for life in a fortress, and sent to Hanover, where, three years later, she died. She too was a reformer, and it was on that score that she was hated by the nobles.[3] Both she and Struensee, in short, were the victims of a violent political reaction. There is an elaborate account of Struensee's conversion to Christianity in prison by the German Dr. Munter,[4] which makes him out by his own confession an excessive voluptuary. It is an extremely suspicious document, exhibiting strong political bias, and giving Struensee no credit for reforms; the apparent assumption being

1 Crichton-Wheaton, ii, 322. Cp. pp. 161–63. Schlosser, iv, 15.

2 Crichton-Wheaton, ii, 190; Otté, p. 322; C.-F. Allen, as cited, ii, 194–201; Schlosser, iv, 319 *sq.*

3 Cp. Mary Wollstonecraft's *Letters from Sweden, Norway, and Denmark*, 1796, Let. xviii. One of the grounds on which the queen was charged with unchastity was, that she had established a hospital for foundlings.

4 Trans. from the German, 1774; 2nd ed. 1825. See it also in the work, *Converts from Infidelity*, by Andrew Crichton; vols. vi and vii of Constable's Miscellany, 1827. This singular compilation includes lives of Boyle, Bunyan, Haller, and others, who were never "infidels."

that the conversion of a reprobate was of more evidential value than that of a reputable and reflective type.

In spite of the reaction, rationalism persisted among the cultured class. Mary Wollstonecraft, visiting Denmark in 1795, noted that there and in Norway the press was free, and that new French publications were translated and freely discussed. The press had in fact been freed by Struensee, and was left free by his enemies because of the facilities it had given them to attack him.[1] "On the subject of religion," she added, "they are likewise becoming tolerant, at least, and perhaps have advanced a step further in freethinking. One writer has ventured to deny the divinity of Jesus Christ, and to question the necessity or utility of the Christian system, without being considered universally as a monster, which would have been the case a few years ago."[2] She likewise noted that there was in Norway very little of the fanaticism she had seen gaining ground, on Wesleyan lines, in England.[3] But though the Danes had "translated many German works on education," they had "not adopted any of their plans"; there were few schools, and those not good. Norway, again, had been kept without a university under Danish rule; and not until one was established at Christiania in 1811 could Norwegian faculty play its part in the intellectual life of Europe. The reaction, accordingly, soon afterwards began to gain head. Already in 1790 "precautionary measures" had been attempted against the press;[4] and, these being found inefficient, an edict was issued in 1799 enforcing penalties against all anonymous writers—a plan which of course struck at the publishers. But the great geographer, Malte-Brun, was exiled, as were Heiberg, the dramatic poet, and others; and again there was "a temporary stagnation in literature," which, however, soon passed away in the nineteenth century. Meantime Sweden and Denmark had alike contributed vitally to the progress of European science; though neither had shared in the work of freethought as against dogma.

§ 3. *The Slavonic States*

1. In Poland, where, as we saw, Unitarian heresy had spread considerably in the sixteenth century, positive atheism is heard of in 1688–89, when Count LISZINSKI (or Lyszczynski), among whose papers, it was said, had been found the written statement that there is no God, or that man had made God out of nothing, was denounced

[1] Crichton-Wheaton, ii, 190–91.
[2] Work cited, Letter vii.
[3] *Id.* Letter viii, near end.
[4] Crichton-Wheaton, ii, 324.

by the bishops of Posen and Kioff, tried, and found guilty of denying not only the existence of God but the doctrine of the Trinity and the Virgin Birth. After being tortured, beheaded, and burned, his ashes were scattered from a cannon.[1] The first step was to tear out his tongue, "with which he had been cruel towards God"; the next to burn his hands at a slow fire. It is all told by Zulaski, the leading Inquisitionist.[2] But even had a less murderous treatment been meted out to such heresy, anarchic Poland, ridden by Jesuits, was in no state to develop a rationalistic literature. The old king, John Sobieski, made no attempt to stop the execution, though he is credited with a philosophical habit of mind, and with reprimanding the clergy for not admitting modern philosophy in the universities and schools.[3]

2. In Russia the possibilities of modern freethought emerge only in the seventeenth century, when Muscovy was struggling out of Byzantine barbarism. The late-recovered treasure of ancient folk-poesy, partly preserved by chance among the northern peasantry, tells of the complete rupture wrought in the racial life by the imposition of Byzantine Christianity from the south. As early as the fourteenth century the Strigolniks, who abounded at Novgorod, had held strongly by anti-ecclesiastical doctrines of the Paulician and Lollard type;[4] but orthodox fanaticism ruled life in general down to the age of Peter the Great. In the sixteenth century we find the usual symptom of criticism of the lives of the monks;[5] but the culture was almost wholly ecclesiastical; and in the seventeenth century the effort of the turbulent Patriarch Nikon (1605–1681), to correct the corrupt sacred texts and the traditional heterodox practices, was furiously resisted, to the point of a great schism.[6] He himself had violently denounced other innovations, destroying pictures and an organ in the manner of Savonarola; but his own elementary reforms were found intolerable by the orthodox,[7] though they were favoured by Sophia, the able and ambitious sister of

[1] He claimed that the remarks penned by him in an anti-atheistic work, challenging its argument, represented not unbelief but the demand for a better proof, which he undertook to produce. See Krasinski, *Sketch of the Religious History of the Slavonic Nations*, 1851, pp. 224–25. It is remarkable that the Pope, Innocent XI, bitterly censured the execution.

[2] Fletcher, *History of Poland*, 1831, p. 141.

[3] Fletcher, pp. 145–46.

[4] Hardwick, *Church History: Middle Age*, 1853, pp. 386–87.

[5] L. Sichler, *Hist. de la litt. Russe*, 1887, pp. 88–89, 139. Cp. Rambaud, *Hist. de Russie*, 2e édit. pp. 249, 259, etc. (Eng. tr. i, 309, 321, 328).

[6] R. N. Bain, *The First Romanovs*, 1905, pp. 136–51; Rambaud, p. 333 (tr. i, 414–17). The struggle (1654) elicited old forms of heresy, going back to Manicheism and Gnosticism. In this furious schism Nikon destroyed irregular *ikons* or sacred images; and savage persecutions resulted from his insistence that the faithful should use three fingers instead of two in crossing themselves. Many resisted to the death.

[7] Prince Serge Wolkonsky, *Russian History and Literature*, 1897, pp. 98–101.

Peter.[1] The priest Kriežanitch (1617–1678), who wrote a work on "The Russian Empire in the second half of the Seventeenth Century," denounced researches in physical science as "devilish heresies";[2] and it is on record that scholars were obliged to study in secret and by night for fear of the hostility of the common people.[3] Half-a-century later the orthodox majority seems to have remained convinced of the atheistic tendency of all science;[4] and the friends of the new light doubtless included deists from the first. Not till the reforms of Peter had begun to bear fruit, however, could free-thought raise its head. The great Czar, who promoted printing and literature as he did every other new activity of a practical kind, took the singular step of actually withdrawing writing materials from the monks, whose influence he held to be wholly reactionary.[5] In 1703 appeared the first Russian journal; and in 1724 Peter founded the first Academy of Sciences, enjoining upon it the study of languages and the production of translations. Now began the era of foreign culture and translations from the French.[6] Prince Kantemir, the satirist, who was with the Russian embassy in London in 1733, pronounced England, then at the height of the deistic tide, "the most civilized and enlightened of European nations."[7] The fact that he translated Fontenelle on *The Plurality of Worlds* tells further of his liberalism.[8] Gradually there arose a new secular fiction, under Western influences; and other forms of culture slowly advanced likewise, notably under Elisabeth Petrovna. At length, in the reign of Catherine II, called the Great, French ideas, already heralded by *belles lettres*, found comparatively free headway. She herself was a deist, and a satirist of bigots in her comedies;[9] she accomplished what Peter had planned, the secularization of Church property;[10] and she was long the admiring correspondent of Voltaire, to whom and to D'Alembert and Diderot she offered warm invitations to reside at her court. Diderot alone accepted, and him she specially befriended, buying his library when he was fain to sell it, and constituting him its salaried keeper. In no country, not excepting England, was there more of practical freedom than in Russia under

[1] Morfill, *History of Russia*, 1902, p. 14; Bain, p. 201. [2] Cp. Wolkonsky, p. 101.
[3] C. E. Turner, *Studies in Russian Literature*, 1882, p. 2.
[4] *Id.* pp. 16, 17, 25, 26, 40; Sichler, p. 148.
[5] Sichler, p. 139. Peter's dislike of monks won him the repute of a freethinker. Morfill, p. 97. He was actually attacked as "Antichrist" in a printed pamphlet on the score of his innovations. Personally, he detested religious persecution, and was willing to tolerate anybody but Jews; but he had to let persecution take place; and even to consent to removing statues of pagan deities from his palace. Bain, pp. 304–309.
[6] Cp. Bain, p. 392.
[7] Turner, p. 22. Kantemir was the friend of Bolingbroke and Montesquieu in Paris.
[8] Sichler, p. 147. [9] Turner, pp. 40–41.
[10] See the passages cited by Rambaud, p. 482. from her letter to Voltaire.

her rule;[1] and if after the outbreak of the Revolution she turned political persecutor, she was still not below the English level. Her half-crazy son Paul II, whom she had given cause to hate her, undid her work wherever he could. But neither her reaction nor his rule could eradicate the movement of thought begun in the educated classes; though in Russia, as in the Scandinavian States, it was not till the nineteenth century that original serious literature flourished.

§ 4. *Italy*

1. Returning to Italy, no longer the leader of European thought, but still full of veiled freethinking, we find in the seventeenth century the proof that no amount of such predisposition can countervail thoroughly bad political conditions. Ground down by the matchless misrule of Spain, from which the conspiracy of the monk Campanella vainly sought to free her, and by the kindred tyranny of the papacy, Italy could produce in its educated class, save for the men of science and the students of economics, only triflers, whose unbelief was of a piece with their cynicism. While Naples and the south decayed, mental energy had for a time flourished in Tuscany, where, under the grand dukes from Ferdinando I onwards, industry and commerce had revived; and even after a time of retrogression Ferdinando II encouraged science, now made newly glorious by the names of Galileo and Torricelli. But again there was a relapse; and at the end of the century, under a bigoted duke, Florence was priest-ridden and, at least in outward seeming, gloomily superstitious; while, save for the better conditions secured at Naples under the viceroyalty of the Marquis of Carpi,[2] the rest of Italy was cynically corrupt and intellectually superficial.[3] Even in Naples, of course, enlightenment was restricted to the few. Burnet observes that "there are societies of men at Naples of freer thoughts than can be found in any other place of Italy"; and he admits a general tendency of intelligent Italians to recoil from Christianity by reason of Catholic corruption. But at the same time he insists that, though the laity speak with scorn of the clergy, "yet they are masters of the spirits of the people."[4] Yet it only needed the breathing time and the improved conditions under the Bourbon rule in the eighteenth century to set up a wonderful intellectual revival.

2. First came the great work of VICO, the *Principles of a New*

[1] Seume, *Ueber das Leben.....der Kaiserin Catharina II: Werke*, ed. 1839, v, 239-40; Rambaud, pp. 482-84.
[2] See Bishop Burnet's *Letters*, iv, ed. Rotterdam, 1686, pp. 187-91.
[3] Zeller, *Histoire d'Italie*, pp. 426-32, 450; Procter, *Hist. of Italy*, 2nd ed. pp. 240, 268.
[4] Burnet, as cited, pp. 195-97.

Science (1725), whereof the originality and the depth—qualities in which, despite its incoherences, it on the whole excels Montesquieu's *Spirit of Laws*—place him among the great freethinkers in philosophy. It was significant of much that Vico's book, while constantly using the vocabulary of faith, grappled with the science of human development in an essentially secular and scientific spirit. This is the note of the whole eighteenth century in Italy.[1] Vico posits Deity and Providence, but proceeds nevertheless to study the laws of civilization inductively from its phenomena. He permanently obscured his case, indeed, by insisting on putting it theologically, and condemning Grotius and others for separating the idea of law from that of religion. Only in a pantheistic sense has Vico's formula any validity; and he never avows a pantheistic view, refusing even to go with Grotius in allowing that Hebrew law was akin to that of other nations. But a rationalistic view, had he put it, would have been barred. The wonder is, in the circumstances, not that he makes so much parade of religion, but that he could venture to undermine so vitally its pretensions, especially after he had found it prudent to renounce the project of annotating the great work of Grotius, *De Jure Belli et Pacis*, on the score that (as he puts it in his Autobiography) a good Catholic must not endorse a heretic.

Signor Benedetto Croce, in his valuable work on Vico (*The Philosophy of Giambattista Vico*, Eng. tr. 1913, pp. 89–94), admits that Vico is fundamentally at one with the Naturalists: "Like them, in constructing his science of human society, he excludes with Grotius all idea of God, and with Pufendorf considers man as without help or attention from God, excluding him, that is, from revealed religion and its God." Of Vico's opposition to Grotius, Signor Croce offers two unsatisfactory explanations. First: "Vico's opposition, which he expresses with his accustomed confusion and obscurity, turns.....upon the actual conception of religion.....Religion.....means for Vico not necessarily revelation, but conception of reality." This reduces the defence to a quibble; but finally Signor Croce asks himself "Why—if Vico agreed with the natural-right school in ignoring revelation, and if he instead of it deepened their superficial immanental doctrine—why he put himself forward as their implacable enemy and persisted in boasting loudly before prelates and pontiffs of having formulated a system of natural rights different from that of the three Protestant authors and adapted to the Roman Church." The natural suggestion of "politic caution" Signor Croce rejects,

[1] Prof. Flint, who insists on the deep piety of Vico, notes that he "appears to have had strangely little interest in Christian systematic theology" (*Vico*, 1884, p. 70).

declaring that "the spotless character of Vico entirely precludes it; and we can only suppose that, *lacking as his ideas always were in clarity*, on this occasion he *indulged his tendency to confusion and nourished his illusions*, to the extent of conferring upon himself the flattering style and title of *Defensor Ecclesiæ* at the very moment when he was destroying the religion of the Church by means of humanity."

It is very doubtful whether this equivocal vindication is more serviceable to Vico's fame than the plain avowal that a writer placed as he was, in the Catholic world of 1720, could not be expected to be straightforward upon such an issue. Vico comported himself towards the Catholic Church very much as Descartes did. His own declaration as to his motives is surely valid as against a formula which combines "spotless character" with a cherished "tendency to confusion." The familiar "tendency to hedge" is a simpler conception.

3. It is noteworthy, indeed, that the "New Science," as Vico boasted, arose in the Catholic and not in the Protestant world. We might say that, genius apart, the reason was that the energy which elsewhere ran to criticism of religion as such had in Catholic Italy to take other channels. By attacking a Protestant position which was really less deeply heterodox than his own, Vico secured Catholic currency for a philosopheme which on its own merits Catholic theologians would have scouted as atheism. As it was, Vico's sociology aroused on the one hand new rationalistic speculation as to the origin of civilization, and on the other orthodox protest on the score of its fundamentally anti-Biblical character. It was thus attacked in 1749 by Damiano Romano, and later by Finetti, a professor at Padua, àpropos of the propaganda raised by Vico's followers as to the animal origin of the human race. This began with Vico's disciple, Emmanuele Duni, a professor at Rome, who published a series of sociological essays in 1763. Thenceforth for many years there raged, "under the eyes of Pope and cardinals," an Italian debate between the *Ferini* and *Antiferini*, the affirmers and deniers of the animal origin of man, the latter of course taking up their ground on the Bible, from which Finetti drew twenty-three objections to Vico.[1] Duni found it prudent to declare that he had "no intention of discussing the origin of the world, still less that of the Hebrew nation, but solely that of the Gentile nations"; but even when thus limited the debate set up far-reaching disturbance. At this stage Italian sociology doubtless owed something to Montesquieu and Rousseau; but the fact remains that the *Scienza Nuova* was a

[1] Siciliani, *Sul Rinnovamento della filosofia positiva in Italia*, 1871, pp. 37–41.

book "truly Italian; Italian *par excellence*."[1] It was Vico, too, who led the way in the critical handling of early Roman history, taken up later by Beaufort, and still later by Niebuhr; and it was he who began the scientific analysis of Homer, followed up later by F. A. Wolf.[2] By a fortunate coincidence, the papal chair was held at the middle of the century (1740–1758) by the most learned, tolerant, and judicious of modern popes, Benedict XIV,[3] whose influence was used for political peace in Europe and for toleration in Italy; and whom we shall find, like Clement XIV, on friendly terms with a freethinker. In the same age Muratori and Giannone amassed their unequalled historical learning; and a whole series of Italian writers broke new ground on the field of social science, Italy having led the way in this as formerly in philosophy and physics.[4] The Hanoverian Dr. G. W. Alberti, of Italian descent, writes in 1752 that "Italy is full of atheists";[5] and Grimm, writing in 1765, records that according to capable observers the effect of the French freethinking literature in the past thirty years had been immense, especially in Tuscany.[6]

4. Between 1737 and 1798 may be counted twenty-eight Italian writers on political economy; and among them was one, CESARE BECCARIA, who on another theme produced perhaps the most practically influential single book of the eighteenth century,[7] the treatise on *Crimes and Punishments* (1764), which affected penal methods for the better throughout the whole of Europe. Even were he not known to be a deist, his strictly secular and rationalist method would have brought upon him priestly suspicion; and he had in fact to defend himself against pertinacious and unscrupulous attacks,[8] though he had sought in his book to guard himself by occasionally "veiling the truth in clouds."[9] As we have seen, Beccaria owed his intellectual awakening first to Montesquieu and above all to Helvétius—another testimony to the reformative virtue of all freethought.

[1] Siciliani, p. 36.

[2] Introduction (by Mignet?) to the Princess Belgiojoso's tr. *La Science Nouvelle*, 1844, p. cxiii. Cp. Flint, *Vico*, 231.

[3] *Ganganelli, Papst Clemens XIV, seine Briefe und seine Zeit*, vom Verfasser des Römischen Briefe (Von Reumont), 1847, pp. 35–36, and p. 155, *note*.

[4] See the *Storia della economia pubblica in Italia* of G. Pecchio, 1829, p. 61 *sq.*, as to the claim of Antonio Serra (*Breve trattato*, etc. 1613) to be the pioneer of modern political economy. Cp. Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, iii, 164–66. Buckle (1-vol. ed. p. 122, *note*) has claimed the title for William Stafford, whose *Compendious or briefe Examination of certain ordinary Complaints* (otherwise called *A Briefe Conceipt of English Policy*) appeared in 1581. But cp. Ingram (*Hist. of Pol. Econ.* 1888, pp. 43–45) as to the prior claims of Bodin.

[5] *Briefe*, as before cited, p. 408.

[6] *Correspondance littéraire*, ed. 1829–31, vii, 331. Cp. Von Reumont, *Ganganelli*, p. 33.

[7] The *Dei delitti e delle pene* was translated into 22 languages. Pecchio, p. 144.

[8] See in the 6th ed. of the *Dei delitti* (Harlem, 1766) the appended *Risposta ad uno scritto*, etc., *Parte prima, Accuse d'empietà*.

[9] See his letter to the Abbé Morellet, cited by Mr. Farrer in ch. i of his ed. of *Crimes and Punishments*, 1880, p. 5. It describes the Milanese as deeply sunk in prejudices.

Of the aforesaid eight-and-twenty writers on economics, probably the majority were freethinkers. Among them, at all events, were Count ALGAROTTI (1712–1764), the distinguished æsthetician, one of the group round Frederick at Berlin and author of *Il Newtonianismo per le dame* (1737); FILANGIERI, whose work on legislation (put on the *Index* by the papacy) won the high praise of Franklin; the Neapolitan *abbate* FERDINANDO GALIANI, one of the brightest and soundest wits in the circle of the French *philosophes;* the other Neapolitan *abbate* ANTONIO GENOVESI (1712–1769), the "redeemer of the Italian mind,"[1] and the chief establisher of economic science for modern Italy.[2] To these names may be added those of ALFIERI, one of the strongest anti-clericalists of his age; BETTINELLI, the correspondent of Voltaire and author of *The Resurrection of Italy* (1775); Count DANDOLO, author of a French work on *The New Men* (1799); and the learned GIANNONE, author of the great anti-papal *History of the Kingdom of Naples* (1723), who, after more than one narrow escape, was thrown in prison by the king of Sardinia, and died there (1748) after twelve years' confinement.

To the merits of Algarotti and Genovesi there are high contemporary testimonies. Algarotti was on friendly terms with Cardinal Ganganelli, who in 1769 became Pope Clement XIV. In 1754 the latter writes[3] him: "My dear Count, Contrive matters so, in spite of your philosophy, that I may see you in heaven; for I should be very sorry to lose sight of you for an eternity. You are one of those rare men, both for heart and understanding, whom we could wish to love even beyond the grave, when we have once had the advantage of knowing them. No one has more reasons to be convinced of the spirituality and immortality of the soul than you have. The years glide away for the philosophers as well as for the ignorant; and what is to be the term of them cannot but employ a man who thinks. Own that I can manage sermons so as not to frighten away a *bel esprit;* and that if every one delivered as short and as friendly sermons as I do, you would sometimes go to hear a preacher. But barely hearing will not do.....the amiable Algarotti must become as good a Christian as he is a philosopher: then should I doubly be his friend and servant."[4]

In an earlier letter, Ganganelli writes: "The Pope [Benedict XIV] is ever great and entertaining for his *bons mots.* He was saying the

[1] Pecchio, p. 123.
[2] Cp. McCulloch, *Literature of Political Economy*, 1845, p. 64; Blanqui, *Hist. de l' economie politique*, 2e édit. ii, 432.
[3] As to the genuineness of the Ganganelli letters, originally much disputed, see Von Reumont's *Ganganelli, Papst Clemens XIV; seine Briefe und seine Zeit*, 1847, pp. 40–44.
[4] Lett. lvi, Eng. tr. 1777, i, 141–42. No. lxxii in Von Reumont's *Ganganelli*, 1847.

other day that he had always loved you, and that it would give him very great pleasure to see you again. He speaks with admiration of the king of Prussia.....whose history will make one of the finest monuments of the eighteenth century. See here and acknowledge my generosity! For that prince makes the greatest jest possible of the Court of Rome, and of us monks and friars. Cardinal Querini will not be satisfied unless he have you with him for some time at Brescia. He one day told me that he would invite you to come and dedicate his library.....There is no harm in preaching to a philosopher who seldom goes to hear a sermon, and who will not have become a great saint by residing at Potsdam. You are there three men whose talents might be of great use to religion if you would change their direction—viz. Yourself, Mons. de Voltaire, and M. de Maupertuis. But that is not the *ton* of the age, and you are resolved to follow the fashion."[1] Ganganelli in his correspondence reveals himself as an admirer of Newton[2] and somewhat averse to religious zeal.[3] Of the papal government he admitted that it was favourable "neither to commerce, to agriculture, nor to population, which precisely constitute the essence of public felicity," while suavely reminding the Englishman of the "inconveniences" of his own government.[4] To the learned Muratori, who suffered at the hands of the bigots, he and Pope Benedict XIV gave their sympathy.[5]

But Ganganelli's own thinking on the issues between reason and religion was entirely commonplace. "Whatever," he wrote, "departs from the account given of the Creation in the book of Genesis has nothing to support it but paradoxes, or, at most, mere hypotheses. Moses alone, as being an inspired author, could perfectly acquaint us with the formation of the world, and the development of its parts. .....Whoever does not see the truth in what Moses relates was never born to know it."[6] It was only in his relation to the bigots of his own Church that his thinking was rationalistic. "The Pope," he writes to a French marquis, "relies on Providence; but God does not perform miracles every time he is asked to do it. Besides, is he to perform one that Rome may enjoy a right of seignory over the Duchy of Parma?"[7] At his death an Italian wrote of him that "the distinction he was able to draw between dogmas or discipline and ultramontane opinions gave him the courage to take many oppor-

[1] Lett. xiii, 1749. Eng. tr. i, 44–46; No. cxiv in Von Reumont's translation.
[2] Lett. vi and xiv; Nos. ix and xxii in Von Reumont.
[3] Lett. xxx, p. 83; No. xxxiv in Von Reumont.
[4] Lett. xci; No. xcii in Von Reumont. [5] Lett. cxlvi; No. xiii in Von Reumont.
[6] Lett. lxxxii, 1753 or 1754; No. lxi in Von Reumont.
[7] Lett. cxxiv, 1769. This letter is not in Von Reumont's collection, and appears to be regarded by him as spurious—or unduly indiscreet.

tunities of promoting the peace of the State." His tolerance is sufficiently exhibited in one of his letters to Algarotti: "I hope that you will preach to me some of these days, so that each may have his turn."[1] Freethought had achieved something when a Roman Cardinal, a predestinate Pope, could so write to an avowed free-thinker. Concerning Galiani we have the warm panegyric of Grimm. "If I have any vanity with which to reproach myself," he writes, "it is that which I derive in spite of myself from the fact of the conformity of my ideas with those of the two rarest men whom I have the happiness to know, Galiani and Denis Diderot."[2] Grimm held Galiani to be of all men the best qualified to write a true ecclesiastical history. But the history that would have satisfied him and Grimm was not to be published in that age.

Italy, however, had done her full share, considering her heritage of burdens and hindrances, in the intellectual work of the century; and in the names of Galvani and Volta stands the record of one more of her great contributions to human enlightenment. Under Duke Leopold II of Tuscany the papacy was so far defied that books put on the *Index* were produced for him under the imprint of London;[3] and the papacy itself at length gave way to the spirit of reform, Clement XIV consenting among other things to abolish the Order of Jesuits (1773), after his predecessor had died of grief over his proved impotence to resist the secular policy of the States around him.[4] In Tuscany, indeed, the reaction against the French Revolution was instant and severe. Leopold succeeded his brother Joseph as emperor of Austria in 1790, but died in 1792; and in his realm, as was the case in Denmark and in Spain in the same century, the reforms imposed from above by a liberal sovereign were found to have left much traditionalism untouched. After 1792, Ferdinando III suspended some of his father's most liberal edicts, amid the applause of the reactionaries; and in 1799, after the first short stay of the revolutionary French army, out of its one million inhabitants no fewer than 22,000 were prosecuted for "French opinions."[5] Certainly some of the "French opinions" were wild enough; for instance, the practice among ladies of dressing *alla ghigliottina*, with a red ribbon round the neck, a usage borrowed about 1795 from France.[6] As Quinet sums up, the revolution was too strong a medicine for the Italy of that age. The young abbate

[1] Lett. lxxxiii, 1754; No. lxxiii in Von Reumont.
[2] *Corr. Litt.* as cited, vii, 104.
[3] Zeller, p. 473.
[4] Zeller, pp. 478–79.
[5] Julien Luchaire, *Essai sur l'evolution intellectuelle de l'Italie de 1815 à 1830*, 1906, p. 3.
[6] Parini wrote a reproving Ode on the subject. (Henri Hauvette, *Littérature Italienne*, 1906, p. 371.) He was one of those disillusioned by the course of the Revolution. (*Id.* p. 375.)

Monti, the chief poet of the time, was a freethinker, but he alternated his strokes for freedom with unworthy compliances.[1] Such was the dawn of the new Italian day that has since slowly but steadily broadened, albeit under many a cloud.

§ 5. *Spain and Portugal*

1. For the rest of Europe during the eighteenth century, we have to note only traces of receptive thought. Spain under Bourbon rule, as already noted, experienced an administrative renascence. Such men as Count ARANDA (1718–99) and Aszo y del Rio (1742–1814) wrought to cut the claws of the Inquisition and to put down the Jesuits; but not yet, after the long work of destruction accomplished by the Church in the past, could Spain produce a fresh literature of any far-reaching power. When Aranda was about to be appointed in 1766, his friends the French *Encyclopédistes* prematurely proclaimed their exultation in the reforms he was to accomplish; and he sadly protested that they had thereby limited his possibilities.[2] Nonetheless he wrought much, the power of the Inquisition in Spain being already on the wane. Dr. Joaquin Villanueva, one of the ecclesiastical statesmen who took part in its suppression by the Cortes at Cadiz in 1813, tells how, in his youth, under the reign of Charles III, it was a current saying among the students at college that while the clever ones could rise to important posts in the Church, or in the law, the blockheads would be sure to find places in the Inquisition.[3] It was of course still powerful for social terrorism and minor persecution; but its power of taking life was rapidly dwindling. Between 1746 and 1759 it had burned only ten persons; from 1759 until 1781 it burned only four; thereafter none,[4] the last case having provoked protests which testified to the moral change wrought in Europe by a generation of freethought.

In Spain too, as elsewhere, freethought had made way among the upper classes; and in 1773 we find the Duke d'Alba (formerly Huescar), ex-ambassador of Spain to France, subscribing eighty louis for a statue to Voltaire. "Condemned to cultivate my reason in secret," he wrote to D'Alembert, "I see this opportunity to give a public testimony of my gratitude to and admiration for the great man who first showed me the way."[5]

[1] Hauvette, pp. 391–93.
[2] Coxe, *Memoirs of the Bourbon Kings of Spain*, ed. 1815, iv, 408.
[3] Villanueva, *Vida Literaria*, London, 1825.
[4] Buckle, iii, 547–48 (1-vol. ed. 599–600). The last victim seems to have been a woman accused of witchcraft. Her nose was cut off before her execution. See the *Marokkanische Briefe*, 1785, p. 36; and Buckle's *note* 272.
[5] Letter of D'Alembert to Voltaire, 13 mai, 1773.

2. Still all freethinking in Spain ran immense risks, even under Charles III. The Spanish admiral Solano was denounced by his almoner to the Inquisition for having read Raynal, and had to demand pardon on his knees of the Inquisition and God.[1] Aranda himself was from first to last four times arraigned before the Inquisition,[2] escaping only by his prestige and power. So eminent a personage as P. A. J. Olavidès, known in France as the Count of Pilos (1726–1803), could not thus escape. He had been appointed by Charles III prefect of Seville, and had carried out for the king the great work of colonizing the Sierra Morena,[3] of which region he was governor. At the height of his career, in 1776, he was arrested and imprisoned, "as suspected of professing impious sentiments, particularly those of Voltaire and Rousseau, with whom he had carried on a very intimate correspondence." He had spoken unwarily to inhabitants of the new towns under his jurisdiction concerning the exterior worship of deity in Spain, the worship of images, the fast days, the cessation of work on holy days, the offerings at mass, and all the rest of the apparatus of popular Catholicism.[4] Olavidès prudently confessed his error, declaring that he had "never lost his inner faith." After two years' detention he was forced to make his penance at a lesser *auto da fé* in presence of sixty persons of distinction, many of whom were suspected of holding similar opinions, and were thus grimly warned to keep their counsel. During four hours the reading of his process went on, and then came the sentence. He was condemned to pass eight years in a convent; to be banished forever from Madrid, Seville, Cordova, and the new towns of the Sierra Morena, and to lose all his property; he was pronounced incapable henceforth of holding any public employment or title of honour; and he was forbidden to mount a horse, to wear any ornament of gold, silver, pearls, diamonds, or other precious stones, or clothing of silk or fine linen. On hearing his sentence he fainted. Afterwards, on his knees, he received absolution. Escaping some time afterwards from his convent, he reached France. After some years more, he cynically produced a work entitled *The Gospel Triumphant, or the Philosopher Converted*, which availed to procure a repeal of his sentence; and he returned into favour.[5] In his youth he "had not the talent to play the hypocrite." In the end he mastered the art as few had done.

3. Another grandee, Don Christophe Ximenez de Gongora, Duke of Almodobar, published a free and expurgated translation of

[1] Grimm, *Corr. Litt.* x, 393. [2] Llorente, ii, 534. [3] As to which see Buckle, p. 607.
[4] Llorente, ii, 544. [5] *Id.* ii, 544–47.

Raynal's *History of the Indies* under another title;[1] and though he put upon the book only an anagram of his name, he presented copies to the king. The inquisitors, learning as much, denounced him as "suspected of having embraced the systems of unbelieving philosophers"; but this time the prosecution broke down for lack of evidence.[2] A similar escape was made by Don Joseph Nicholas d'Azara, who had been minister of foreign affairs, minister plenipotentiary of the king at Rome, and ambassador extraordinary at Paris, and was yet denounced at Saragossa and Madrid as an "unbelieving philosopher."[3] Count Ricla, minister of war under Charles III, was similarly charged, and similarly escaped for lack of proofs.[4]

4. In another case, a freethinking priest skilfully anticipated prosecution. Don Philip de Samaniego, "priest, archdeacon of Pampeluna, chevalier of the order of St. James, counsellor of the king and secretary-general, interpreter of foreign languages," was one of those invited to assist at the *auto da fé* of Olavidès. The impression made upon him was so strong that he speedily prepared with his own hand a confession to the effect that he had read many forbidden books, such as those of Voltaire, Mirabeau, Rousseau, Hobbes, Spinoza, Montesquieu, Bayle, D'Alembert, and Diderot; and that he had been thus led into skepticism; but that after serious reflection he had resolved to attach himself firmly and forever to the Catholic faith, and now begged to be absolved. The sentence was memorable. He was ordered first to confirm his confession by oath; then to state how and from whom he had obtained the prohibited books, where they now were, with what persons he had talked on these matters, what persons had either refuted or adopted his views, and which of those persons had seemed to be aware of such doctrines in advance; such a detailed statement being the condition of his absolution. Samaniego obeyed, and produced a long declaration in which he incriminated nearly every enlightened man at the court, naming Aranda, the Duke of Almodobar, Ricla, and the minister Florida Blanca; also General Ricardos, Count of Truillas, General Massones, Count of Montalvo, ambassador at Paris and brother of the Duke of Sotomayor; and Counts Campomanes, Orreilly, and Lascy. Proceedings were begun against one and all; but the undertaking was too comprehensive, and the proofs were avowed to be

[1] Grimm is evidently in error in his statement (*Correspondance*, ed. 1829–31, x, 394) that one of the main grievances against Olavidès was his having caused to be made a Spanish translation of Raynal's book, which was never published. No such offence is mentioned by Llorente. The case of Almodobar had been connected in French rumour with that of Olavidès.

[2] Llorente, ii, 532. [3] *Id.* ii, 534–35. [4] *Id.* pp. 547–48.

insufficient.[1] What became of Samaniego, history saith not. A namesake of his, Don Felix-Maria de Samaniego, one of the leading men of letters of the reign of Charles IV, was arraigned before the Inquisition of Logrogno as "suspected of having embraced the errors of modern philosophers and read prohibited books," but contrived, through his friendship with the minister of justice, to arrange the matter privately.[2]

5. Out of a long series of other men of letters persecuted by the Inquisition for giving signs of enlightenment, a few cases are preserved by its historian, Llorente. Don Benedict Bails, professor of mathematics at Madrid and author of a school-book on the subject, was proceeded against in his old age, towards the end of the reign of Charles III, as suspected of "atheism and materialism." He was ingenuous enough to confess that he had "had doubts on the existence of God and the immortality of the soul," but that after serious reflection he was repentant and ready to abjure all his errors. He thus escaped, after an imprisonment. Don Louis Cagnuelo, advocate, was forced to abjure for having written against popular superstition and against monks in his journal *The Censor*, and was forbidden to write in future on any subject of religion or morals. F. P. Centeno, one of the leading critics of the reigns of Charles III and Charles IV, was an Augustinian monk; but his profession did not save him from the Inquisition when he made enemies by his satirical criticisms, though he was patronized by the minister Florida Blanca. To make quite sure, he was accused at once of atheism and Lutheranism. He had in fact preached against ceremonialism, and as censor he had deleted from a catechism for the free schools of Madrid an article affirming the existence of the Limbo of children who had died unbaptized. Despite a most learned defence, he was condemned as "violently suspected of heresy" and forced to abjure, whereafter he went mad and in that state died.[3]

6. Another *savant* of the same period, Don Joseph de Clavijo y Faxardo, director of the natural history collection at Madrid, was in turn arraigned as having "adopted the anti-Christian principles of modern philosophy." He had been the friend of Buffon and Voltaire at Paris, had admirably translated Buffon's Natural History, with notes, and was naturally something of a deist and materialist. Having the protection of Aranda, he escaped with a secret penance and abjuration.[4] Don Thomas Iriarte, chief of the archives in the

[1] Llorente, ii, 549–50. [2] *Id.* ii, 472–73. [3] *Id.* pp. 436–40.
[4] *Id.* ii, 440–42. Llorente mentions that Clavijo edited a journal named *The Thinker*, "at a time when hardly anyone was to be found who thought." A Frenchman, Langle

ministry of foreign affairs, was likewise indicted towards the end of the reign of Charles III, as "suspected of anti-Christian philosophy," and escaped with similarly light punishment.[1]

7. Still in the same reign, the Jesuit Francisco de Ista, author of an extremely popular satire against absurd preachers, the *History of the famous preacher Fray Gerondif*, published under the pseudonym of Don Francisco Lobon de Salazar—a kind of ecclesiastical *Don Quixote*—so infuriated the preaching monks that the Holy Office received "an almost infinite number of denunciations of the book." Ista, however, was a Jesuit, and escaped, through the influence of his order, with a warning.[2] Influence, indeed, could achieve almost anything in the Holy Office, whether for culprits or against the uninculpable. In 1796, Don Raymond de Salas, a professor at Salamanca, was actually prosecuted by the Inquisition of Madrid as being suspected of having adopted the principles of Voltaire, Rousseau, and other modern philosophers, he having read their works. The poor man proved that he had done so only in order to refute them, and produced the theses publicly maintained at Salamanca by his pupils as a result of his teachings. The prosecution was a pure work of personal enmity on the part of the Archbishop of Santiago (formerly bishop of Salamanca) and others, and Salas was acquitted, with the statement that he was entitled to reparation. Again and again did his enemies revive the case, despite repeated acquittals, he being all the while in durance, and at length he had to "abjure," and was banished the capital. After a time the matter was forced on the attention of the Government, with the result that even Charles IV was asked by his ministers to ordain that henceforth the Inquisition should not arrest anyone without prior intimation to the king. At this stage, however, the intriguing archbishop successfully intervened, and the ancient machinery for the stifling of thought remained intact for the time.[3]

8. It is plain that the combined power of the Church, the orders, and the Inquisition, even under Charles III, had been substantially unimpaired, and rested on a broad foundation of popular fanaticism and ignorance. The Inquisition attacked not merely freethought but heresy of every kind, persecuting Jansenists and Molinists as of old it had persecuted Lutherans, only with less power of murder.

having asserted, in his *Voyage d'Espagne*, that the *Thinker* was without merit, the historian comments that if Langle is right in the assertion, it will be the sole verity in his book, but that, in view of his errors on all other matters, it is probable that he is wrong there also.

[1] Llorente, p. 449.

[2] *Id.* ii, 450-51. The book was prohibited, but a printer at Bayonne reissued it with an additional volume of the tracts written for and against it.

[3] *Id.* ii, 469-72.

That much the Bourbon kings and their ministers could accomplish, but no more. The trouble was that the enlightened administration of Charles III in Spain did not build up a valid popular education, the sole security for durable rationalism. Its school policy, though not without zeal, was undemocratic, and so left the priests in control of the mind of the multitude; and throughout the reign the ecclesiastical revenues had been allowed to increase greatly from private sources.[1] Like Leopold of Tuscany, he was in advance of his people, and imposed his reforms from above. When, accordingly, the weak and pious Charles IV succeeded in 1788, three of the anti-clerical Ministers of his predecessor, including Aranda, were put under arrest,[2] and clericalism resumed full sway, to the extent even of vetoing the study of moral philosophy in the universities.[3] Mentally and materially alike, Spain relapsed to her former state of indigence; and the struggle for national existence against Napoleon helped rather traditionalist sentiment than the spirit of innovation.

9. Portugal in the same period, despite the anti-clerical policy of the famous Marquis of Pombal, made no noticeable intellectual progress. Though that powerful statesman in 1761 abolished slavery in the kingdom,[4] he too failed to see the need for popular education, while promoting that of the upper classes.[5] His expulsion of the Jesuits, accordingly, did but raise up against him a new set of enemies in the shape of the *Jacobeos*, "the Blessed," a species of Catholic Puritan, who accused him of impiety. His somewhat forensic defence[6] leaves the impression that he was in reality a deist; but though he fought the fanatics by imprisoning the Bishop of Coimbra, their leader, and by causing Molière's *Tartufe* to be translated and performed, he does not seem to have shown any favour to the deistical literature of which the Bishop had composed a local *Index Expurgatorius*.[7] In Portugal, as later in Spain, accordingly, a complete reaction set in with the death of the enlightened king. Dom Joseph died in 1777, and Pombal was at once disgraced and his enemies released, the pious Queen Maria and her Ministers subjecting him to persecution for some years. In 1783, the Queen, who became a religious maniac, and died insane,[8] is found establishing new nunneries, and so adding to one of the main factors in the impoverishment, moral and financial, of Portugal.

[1] Buckle, p. 618. [2] *Id.* p. 612. [3] *Id.* p. 613.
[4] Carnota, *The Marquis of Pombal*, 2nd ed. 1871, p. 242.
[5] *Id.* p. 240. [6] *Id.* pp. 261-62. [7] *Id.* p. 262. [8] *Id.* p. 375.

§ 6. *Switzerland*

During the period we have been surveying, up to the French Revolution, Switzerland, which owed much of new intellectual life to the influx of French Protestants at the revocation of the Edict of Nantes,[1] exhibited no less than the other European countries the inability of the traditionary creed to stand criticism. Calvinism by its very rigour generated a reaction within its own special field; and the spirit of the slain Servetus triumphed strangely over that of his slayer. Genevan Calvinism, like that of the English Presbyterians, was transmuted first into a modified Arminianism, then into "Arianism" or Socinianism, then into the Unitarianism of modern times. In the eighteenth century Switzerland contributed to the European movement some names, of which by far the most famous is Rousseau; and the potent presence of Voltaire cannot have failed to affect Swiss culture. Before his period of influence, indeed, there had taken place not a little silent evolution of a Unitarian and deistic kind; Socinianism, as usual, leading the way. Among the families of Italian Protestant refugees who helped to invigorate the life of Switzerland, as French Protestants did later that of Germany, were the Turrettini, of whom Francesco came to Geneva in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. One of his sons, Benedict, made a professor at twenty-four, became a leading theologian and preacher of orthodox Calvinism, and distinguished himself as an opponent of Arminianism.[2] Still more distinguished in his day was Benedict's son François (1623–1687), also a professor, who repeated his father's services, political and controversial, to orthodoxy, and combated Socinianism, as Benedict had done Arminianism. But François's son Jean-Alphonse, also a professor (whose Latin work on Christian evidences, translated into French by a colleague, we have seen adopted and adapted by the Catholic authorities in France), became a virtual Unitarian[3] (1671–1737), and as such is still anathematized by Swiss Calvinists. Against the deists, however, he was industrious, as his grandfather, a heretic to Catholicism, had been against the Arminians, and his father against the Socinians. The family evolution in some degree typifies the theological process from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century; and the apologetics of Jean-Alphonse

[1] Cp. P. Godet, *Hist. litt. de la suisse française*, 1900.

[2] E. de Budé, *Vie de François Turrettini*, 1871, pp. 12–18. B. Turrettini was commissioned to write a history of the Reformation at Geneva, which however remains in MS. He was further commissioned in 1621 to go to Holland to obtain financial help for the city, then seriously menaced by Savoy; and obtained 30,000 florins, besides smaller sums from Hamburg and Bremen.

[3] Cp. Budé, as cited, pp. 24 (birth-date wrong), 294; and the *Avis de l'Éditeur* to the *Traité de la Verité de la Religion Chrétienne* of J. A. Turretin, Paris, 1753.

testify to the vogue of critical deism among the educated class at Geneva in the days of Voltaire's nonage. He (or his translator) deals with the "natural" objections to the faith, cites approvingly Locke, Lardner, and Clarke, and combats Woolston, but names no other English deist. The heresy, therefore, would seem to be a domestic development from the roots noted by Viret nearly two centuries before. One of Turrettini's annotators complacently observes[1] that though deists talk of natural religion, none of them has ever written a book in exposition of it, the task being left to the Christians. The writer must have been aware, on the one hand, that any deist who in those days should openly expound natural religion as against revealed would be liable to execution for blasphemy in any European country save England, where, as it happened, Herbert, Hobbes, Blount, Toland, Collins, Shaftesbury, and Tindal had all maintained the position, and on the other hand he must have known that the *Ethica* of Spinoza was naturalistic. The false taunt merely goes to prove that deists could maintain their heresy on the Continent at that time without the support of books. But soon after Turrettini's time they give literary indication of their existence even in Switzerland; and in 1763 we find Voltaire sending a package of copies of his treatise on Toleration by the hand of "a young M. Turretin of Geneva," who "is worthy to see the brethren, though he is the grandson of a celebrated priest of Baal. He is reserved, but decided, as are most of the Genevese. Calvin begins in our cantons to have no more credit than the pope."[2] For this fling there was a good deal of justification. When in 1763 the Council of Geneva officially burned a pamphlet reprint of the *Vicaire Savoyard* from Rousseau's *Émile* there was an immediate public protest by "two hundred persons, among whom there were three priests";[3] and some five weeks later "a hundred persons came for the third time to protest.....They say that it is permissible to every citizen to write what he will on religion; that he should not be condemned without a hearing; and that the rights of men must be respected."[4] All this was not a sudden product of the freethinking influence of Voltaire and Rousseau, which had but recently begun. An older leaven had long been at work. The *Principes du Droit Naturel* of J. J. Burlamaqui (1748), save for its

[1] Work cited, i, 8, *note*.

[2] Lettre à Damilaville, 6 décembre, 1763. The reserved youth may have been either Jean-Alphonse, grandson of the Socinian professor, who was born in 1735 and died childless, or some other member of the numerous Turrettini clan.

[3] Voltaire to Damilaville, 12 juillet, 1763. "Il faut que vous sachiez," explains Voltaire "que Jean Jacques n'a été condamné que parce qu'on n'aime pas sa personne."

[4] Voltaire to Damilaville, 21 auguste, 1763.

subsumption of deity as the originator of all human tendencies, is strictly naturalistic and utilitarian in its reasoning, and clearly exhibits the influence of Hobbes and Mandeville.[1] Voltaire, too, in his correspondence, is found frequently speaking with a wicked chuckle of the Unitarianism of the clergy of Geneva,[2] a theme on which D'Alembert had written openly in his article *Genève* in the *Encyclopédie* in 1756.[3] So early as 1757, Voltaire roundly affirms that there are only a few Calvinists left: "tous les honnêtes gens sont déistes par Christ."[4] And when the younger Salchi, professor at Lausanne, writes in 1759 that "deism is become the fashionable religion.....Europe is inundated with the works of deists; and their partisans have made perhaps more proselytes in the space of eighty years than were made by the apostles and the first Fathers of the Church,"[5] he must be held to testify in some degree concerning Switzerland. The chief native service to intellectual progress thus far, however, was rendered in the field of the natural sciences, Swiss religious opinion being only passively liberalized, mainly in a Unitarian direction.

[1] Cp. i, 2, 16, 56, 58, 65, 68, 70, 71, 73, 94; ii, 290, etc.

[2] For instance: "Je me recommande contr'eux [les prêtres] à Dieu le père, car pour le *fils*, vous savez qu'il a aussi peu de crédit que sa mère à Genève" (Lettre à D'Alembert, 25 mars, 1758).....Une république où tout le monde est ouvertement sociníen, exceptés ceux qui font anabaptistes ou moraves. Figurez-vous, mon cher ami, qu'il n'y a pas actuellement un chrétien de Genève à Berne; cela fait frémir!" (To the same, 8 fév. 1776.)

[3] On this see the correspondence of Voltaire and D'Alembert, under dates 8, 28, and 29 janvier, 1757.

[4] Lettre à D'Alembert, 27 août, 1757.

[5] *Lettres sur le Déisme*, 1759, p. 6. Cp. pp. 84, 94, 103, 105, 412.

Chapter XX

EARLY FREETHOUGHT IN THE UNITED STATES

1. Perhaps the most signal of all the proofs of the change wrought in the opinion of the civilized world in the eighteenth century is the fact that at the time of the War of Independence the leading statesmen of the American colonies were deists. Such were Benjamin Franklin, the diplomatist of the Revolution; Thomas Paine, its prophet and inspirer; Washington, its commander; and Jefferson, its typical legislator. But for these four men the American Revolution probably could not have been accomplished in that age; and they thus represent in a peculiar degree the power of new ideas, in fit conditions, to transform societies, at least politically. On the other hand, the fashion in which their relation to the creeds of their time has been garbled, alike in American and English histories, proves how completely they were in advance of the average thought of their day; and also how effectively the mere institutional influence of creeds can arrest a nation's mental development. It is still one of the stock doctrines of religious sociology in England and America that deism, miscalled atheism, wrought the Reign of Terror in the French Revolution; when as a matter of fact the same deism was at the head of affairs in the American.

2. The rise of rationalism in the colonies must be traced in the main to the imported English literature of the eighteenth century; for the first Puritan settlements had contained at most only a fraction of freethought; and the conditions, so deadly for all manner even of devout heresy, made avowed unbelief impossible. The superstitions and cruelties of the Puritan clergy, however, must have bred a silent reaction, which prepared a soil for the deism of the next age.[1] "The perusal of Shaftesbury and Collins," writes Franklin with reference to his early youth, "had made me a skeptic," after being "previously so as to many doctrines of Christianity."[2]

[1] John Wesley in his Journal, dating May, 1737, speaks of having everywhere met many more "converts to infidelity" than "converts to Popery," with apparent reference to Carolina.

[2] Such is the wording of the passage in the *Autobiography* in the Edinburgh edition of 1803, p. 25, which follows the French translation of the original MS. In the edition of the *Autobiography and Letters* in the Minerva Library, edited by Mr. Bettany (1891, p. 11), which follows Mr. Bigelow's edition of 1879, it runs: "Being then, from reading Shaftesbury and Collins, become a real doubter in many points of our religious doctrine....."

This was in his seventeenth or eighteenth year, about 1720, so that the importation of deism had been prompt.[1] Throughout life he held to the same opinion, conforming sufficiently to keep on fair terms with his neighbours,[2] and avoiding anything like critical propaganda; though on challenge, in the last year of his life, he avowed his negatively deistic position.[3]

3. Similarly prudent was JEFFERSON, who, like Franklin and Paine, extolled the Gospel Jesus and his teachings, but rejected the notion of supernatural revelation.[4] In a letter written so late as 1822 to a Unitarian correspondent, while refusing to publish another of similar tone, on the score that he was too old for strife, he declared that he "should as soon undertake to bring the crazy skulls of Bedlam to sound understanding as to inculcate reason into that of an Athanasian."[5] His experience of the New England clergy is expressed in allusions to Connecticut as having been "the last retreat of monkish darkness, bigotry, and abhorrence of those advances of the mind which had carried the other States a century ahead of them"; and in congratulations with John Adams (who had written that "this would be the best of all possible worlds if there were no religion in it"), when "this den of the priesthood is at last broken up."[6] John Adams, whose letters with their "crowd of skepticisms" kept even Jefferson from sleep,[7] seems to have figured as a member of a Congregationalist church, while in reality a Unitarian.[8] Still more prudent was Washington, who seems to have ranked habitually as a member of the Episcopal church; but concerning whom Jefferson relates that, when the clergy, having noted his constant abstention from any public mention of the Christian religion, so penned an address to him on his withdrawal from the Presidency as almost to force him to some declaration, he answered every part of the address but that, which he entirely ignored. It is further noted that only in his valedictory letter to the governors of the States, on resigning his commission, did he speak of the "benign influence of the Christian religion"[9]—the common tone of the American deists of that day. It is further

[1] Only in 1784, however, appeared the first anti-Christian work published in America, Ethan Allen's *Reason the only Oracle of Man*. As to its positions see Conway, *Life of Paine*, ii, 192–93.

[2] *Autobiography*, Bettany's ed. pp. 56, 65, 74, 77, etc.

[3] Letter of March 9, 1790. *Id.* p. 636.

[4] Cp. J. T. Morse's *Thomas Jefferson*, pp. 339–40.

[5] MS. cited by Dr. Conway, *Life of Paine*, ii, 310–11.

[6] *Memoirs of Jefferson*, 1829, iv, 300–301. The date is 1817. These and other passages exhibiting Jefferson's deism are cited in Rayner's *Sketches of the Life*, etc., *of Jefferson*, 1832, pp. 513–17.

[7] *Memoirs of Jefferson*, iv, 331.

[8] Dr. Conway, *Life of Paine*, ii, 310.

[9] Extract from Jefferson's Journal under date February 1, 1800, in the *Memoirs*, iv, 512. Gouverneur Morris, whom Jefferson further cites as to Washington's unbelief, is not a very good witness; but the main fact cited is significant.

established that Washington avoided the Communion in church.[1] For the rest, the broad fact that all mention of deity was excluded from the Constitution of the United States must be historically taken to signify a profound change in the convictions of the leading minds among the people as compared with the beliefs of their ancestors. At the same time, the fact that they as a rule dissembled their unbelief is a proof that, even where legal penalties do not attach to an avowal of serious heresy, there inheres in the menace of mere social ostracism a power sufficient to coerce the outward life of public and professional men of all grades, in a democratic community where faith maintains and is maintained by a competitive multitude of priests. With this force the freethought of our own age has to reckon, after Inquisitions and blasphemy laws have become obsolete.

4. Nothing in American culture-history more clearly proves the last proposition than the case of THOMAS PAINE, the virtual founder of modern democratic freethought in Great Britain and the States.[2] It does not appear that Paine openly professed any heresy while he lived in England, or in America before the French Revolution. Yet the first sentence of his *Age of Reason*, of which the first part was written shortly before his imprisonment, under sentence of death from the Robespierre Government, in Paris (1793), shows that he had long held pronounced deistic opinions.[3] They were probably matured in the States, where, as we have seen, such views were often privately held, though there, as Franklin is said to have jesuitically declared in his old age, by way of encouraging immigration: "Atheism is unknown; infidelity rare and secret, so that persons may live to a great age in this country without having their piety shocked by meeting with either an atheist or an infidel." Paine did an unequalled service to the American Revolution by his *Common Sense* and his series of pamphlets headed *The Crisis:* there is, in fact, little question that but for the intense stimulus thus given by him at critical moments the movement might have collapsed at an early stage. Yet he seems to have had no thought there and then of avowing his deism. It was in part for the express purpose of resisting the ever-strengthening attack of atheism in France on deism

[1] Compare the testimony given by the Rev. Dr. Wilson, of Albany, in 1831, as cited by R. D. Owen in his *Discussion on the Authenticity of the Bible* with O. Bacheler (London, ed. 1840, p. 231), with the replies on the other side (pp. 233-34). Washington's death-bed attitude was that of a deist. See all the available data for his supposed orthodoxy in Sparks's *Life of Washington*, 1852, app. iv.

[2] So far as is known, Paine was the first writer to use the expression, "the religion of Humanity." See Conway's *Life of Paine*, ii, 206. To Paine's influence, too, appears to be due the founding of the first American Anti-Slavery Society. *Id.* i, 51-52, 60, 80, etc.

[3] Cp. Conway's *Life of Paine*, ii, 205-207.

itself that he undertook to save it by repudiating the Judæo-Christian revelation; and it is not even certain that he would have issued the *Age of Reason* when it did appear, had he not supposed he was going to his death when put under arrest, on which score he left the manuscript for publication.[1]

5. Its immediate effect was much greater in Britain, where his *Rights of Man* had already won him a vast popularity in the teeth of the most furious reaction, than in America. There, to his profound chagrin, he found that his honest utterance of his heresy brought on him hatred, calumny, ostracism, and even personal and political molestation. In 1797 he had founded in Paris the little "Church of Theo-philanthropy," beginning his inaugural discourse with the words: "Religion has two principal enemies, Fanaticism and Infidelity, or that which is called atheism. The first requires to be combated by reason and morality; the other by natural philosophy."[2] These were his settled convictions; and he lived to find himself shunned and vilified, in the name of religion, in the country whose freedom he had so puissantly wrought to win.[3] The Quakers, his father's sect, refused him a burial-place. He has had sympathy and fair play, as a rule, only from the atheists whom he distrusted and opposed, or from thinkers who no longer hold by deism. There is reason to think that in his last years the deistic optimism which survived the deep disappointments of the French Revolution began to give way before deeper reflection on the cosmic problem,[4] if not before the treatment he had undergone at the hands of Unitarians and Trinitarians alike. The Butlerian argument, that Nature is as unsatisfactory as revelation, had been pressed upon him by Bishop Watson in a reply to the *Age of Reason;* and though, like most deists of his age, he regarded it as a vain defence of orthodoxy, he was not the man to remain long blind to its force against deistic assumptions. Like Franklin, he had energetically absorbed and given

[1] A letter of Franklin to someone who had shown him a freethinking manuscript, advising against its publication (Bettany's ed. p. 620), has been conjecturally connected with Paine, but was clearly not addressed to him. Franklin died in 1790, and Paine was out of America from 1787 onwards. But the letter is in every way inapplicable to the *Age of Reason*. The remark: "If men are so wicked *with* religion, what would they be *without* it?" could not be made to a devout deist like Paine.

[2] Conway, *Life of Paine*, ii, 254–55.

[3] See Dr. Conway's chapter, "The American Inquisition," vol. ii, ch. xvi; also pp. 361–62, 374, 379. The falsity of the ordinary charges against Paine's character is finally made clear by Dr. Conway, ch. xix, and pp. 371, 383, 419, 423. Cp. the author's pamphlet, *Thomas Paine: An Investigation* (Bonner). The chronically revived story of his death-bed remorse for his writings—long ago exposed (Conway, ii, 420)—is definitively discredited in the latest reiteration. That occurs in the *Life and Letters of Dr. R. H. Thomas* (1905), the mother of whose stepmother was the Mrs. Mary Hinsdale, née Roscoe, on whose testimony the legend rests. Dr. Thomas, a Quaker of the highest character, accepted the story without question, but incidentally tells of the old lady (p. 13) that "*her wandering fancies* had all the charm of a present fairy-tale to us." No further proof is needed, after the previous exposure, of the worthlessness of the testimony in question.

[4] Conway, ii, 371.

out the new ideals of physical science; his originality in the invention of a tubular iron bridge, and in the application of steam to navigation,[1] being nearly as notable as that of Franklin's great discovery concerning electricity. Had the two men drawn their philosophy from the France of the latter part of the century instead of the England of the first, they had doubtless gone deeper. As it was, temperamental optimism had kept both satisfied with the transitional formula; and in the France of before and after the Revolution they lived pre-occupied with politics.

6. The habit of reticence or dissimulation among American public men was only too surely confirmed by the treatment meted out to Paine. Few stood by him; and the vigorous deistic movement set up in his latter years by Elihu Palmer soon succumbed to the conditions,[2] though Palmer's book, *The Principles of Nature* (1802, rep. by Richard Carlile, 1819), is a powerful attack on the Judaic and Christian systems all along the line. George Houston, leaving England after two years' imprisonment for his translation of d'Holbach's *Ecce Homo*, went to New York, where he edited the *Minerva* (1822), reprinted his book, and started a freethought journal, *The Correspondence*. That, however, lasted only eighteen months. All the while, such statesmen as Madison and Monroe, the latter Paine's personal friend, seem to have been of his way of thinking,[3] though the evidence is scanty. Thus it came about that, save for the liberal movement of the Hicksite Quakers,[4] the American deism of Paine's day was decorously transformed into the later Unitarianism, the extremely rapid advance of which in the next generation is the best proof of the commonness of private unbelief. The influence of Priestley, who, persecuted at home, went to end his days in the States, had doubtless much to do with the Unitarian development there, as in England; but it seems certain that the whole deistic movement, including the work of Paine and Palmer, had tended to move out of orthodoxy many of those who now, recoiling from the fierce hostility directed against the outspoken freethinkers, sought a more rational form of creed than that of the orthodox churches. The deistic tradition in a manner centred in the name of Jefferson, and the known deism of that leader would do much to make fashionable a heresy which combined his views with a decorous attitude to the Sacred Books.

[1] See the details in Conway's *Life*, ii, 280-81, and *note*. He had also a scheme for a gunpowder motor (*id.* and i, 240), and various other remarkable plans.
[2] Conway, ii, 362-71.
[3] Testimonies quoted by R. D. Owen, as cited, pp. 231-32.
[4] Conway, ii, 422.

Chapter XXI

FREETHOUGHT IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The Reaction

All over the civilized world, as we have seen, the terrors of the French Revolution evoked an intellectual no less than a political reaction, its stress being most apparent and most destructive in those countries in which there had been previously the largest measure of liberty. Nowhere was it more intense or more disastrous than in England. In countries such as Denmark and Spain, only lately and superficially liberalized, there was no great progress to undo: in England, though liberty was never left without an indomitable witness, there was a violent reversal of general movement, not to be wholly rectified in half a century. Joined in a new activity with the civil power for the suppression of all innovating thought, the Church rapidly attained to an influence it had not possessed since the days of Sacheverel and a degree of wealth it had not before reached since the Reformation. The wealth of the upper class was at its disposal to an unheard-of extent, there being apparently no better way of fighting the new danger of democracy; and dissent joined hands with the establishment to promote orthodoxy.

The average tone in England in the first quarter of the century may be gathered from the language held by a man so enlightened, comparatively speaking, as Sydney Smith, wit, humourist, Whig, and clergyman. In 1801 we find him, in a preface never reprinted, prescribing various measures of religious strategy in addition "to the just, necessary, and innumerable invectives which have been levelled against Rousseau, Voltaire, D'Alembert, and the whole pandemonium of those martyrs to atheism, who toiled with such laborious malice, and suffered odium with such inflexible profligacy, for the wretchedness and despair of their fellow creatures."[1] That this was not jesting may be gathered from his daughter's account of his indignation when a publisher sent him "a work of irreligious tendency," and when Jeffrey admitted "irreligious

[1] *Memoir of Sydney Smith*, by his daughter, Lady Holland, ed. 1869, p. 49. Lady Holland remarks on the same page that her father's religion had in it "nothing intolerant."

opinions" to the *Edinburgh Review*. To the former he writes that "every principle of suspicion and fear would be excited in me by a man who professed himself an infidel"; and to Jeffrey: "Do you mean to take care that the Review shall not profess infidel principles? Unless this is the case I must absolutely give up all connection with it."[1] All the while any semblance of "infidelity" in any article in the Review must have been of the most cautious kind.

In the Catholic countries, naturally, the reaction was no less violent. In Italy, as we saw, it began in Tuscany almost at once. The rule of Napoleon, it is true, secured complete freedom of the Press as regarded translation of freethinking books, an entire liberty of conscience in religious matters, and a sharp repression of clericalism, the latter policy going to the length of expelling all the religious orders and confiscating their property.[2] All this counted for change; but the Napoleonic rule all the while choked one of the springs of vital thought—to wit, the spirit of political liberty; and in 1814–15 the clerical system returned in full force, as it did all over Italy. Everywhere freethought was banned. All criticism of Catholicism was a penal offence; and in the kingdom of Naples alone, in 1825, there were 27,612 priests, 8,455 monks, 8,185 nuns, 20 archbishops, and 73 bishops, though in 1807 the French influence had caused the dissolution of some 250 convents.[3] At Florence the Censure forbade, in 1817, the issue of a new edition of the translated work of Cabanis on *Les Rapports du physique et du moral;* and Mascagni, the physiologist, was invited to delete from his work a definition of man in which no notice was taken of the soul.[4] It was even proclaimed that the works of Voltaire and Rousseau were not to be read in the public libraries without ecclesiastical permission; but this veto was not seriously treated.[5] All native energy, however, was either cowed or cajoled into passivity. If, accordingly, the mind of Italy was to survive, it must be by the assimilation of the culture of freer States; and this culture, reinforced by the writings of Leopardi, generated a new intellectual life, which was a main factor in the ultimate achievement of Italian liberation from Austrian rule.

Spain, under Charles IV, became so thoroughly re-clericalized at the very outbreak of the Revolution that no more leeway seemed possible; but even in Spain, early in the nineteenth century, the government found means to retrogress yet further, and the minister Caballero sent an order to the universities forbidding the study of

1 *Memoir of Sydney Smith*, p. 142.
2 Julien Luchaire, *Essai sur l'évolution intellectuelle de l'Italie*, 1906, pp. 5–7.
3 Dr. Ramage, *Nooks and Byeways of Italy*, 1868, pp. 76, 105–13. Ramage describes the helplessness of the better minds before 1830. 4 Luchaire, pp. 35, 36. 5 *Id.* p. 30.

moral philosophy. The king, he justly declared, did not want philosophers, but good and obedient subjects.[1]

In France, where the downfall of Napoleon meant the restoration of the monarchy, the intellectual reaction was really less powerful than in England. The new spirit had been too widely and continuously at work, from Voltaire onwards, to be politically expelled; and the revolutions of 1830 and 1848 gave the proof that even on the political side the old spirit was incapable of permanent recovery. In Germany, where freethinking was associated not with the beaten cause of the Revolution but in large measure with the national movement for liberation from the tyranny of Napoleon,[2] the religious reaction was substantially emotional and unintellectual, though it had intellectual representatives, notably Schleiermacher. Apart from his culture-movement, the revival consisted mainly in a new Pietism, partly orthodox, partly mystical;[3] and on those lines it ran later to the grossest excesses. But among the educated classes of Germany there was the minimum of arrest, because there the intellectual life was least directly associated with the political, and the ecclesiastical life relatively the least organized. The very separateness of the German States, then and later so often deplored by German patriots, was really a condition of relative security for freedom of thought and research; and the resulting multiplicity of universities meant a variety of intellectual effort not then paralleled in any other country.[4] What may be ranked as the most important effect of the reaction in Germany—the turning of Kant, Fichte, and Hegel in succession to the task of reconciling rational philosophy with religion in the interests of social order—was in itself a rationalistic process as compared with the attitude of orthodoxy in other lands. German scholarship, led by the re-organized university of Berlin, was in fact one of the most progressive intellectual forces in Europe during the first half of the nineteenth century; and only its comparative isolation, its confinement to a cultured class, prevented it from affecting popular thought as widely as deism had done in the preceding century. Even in the countries in which popular and university culture were less sharply divided, the German influence was held at bay like others.

[1] Doblado (Blanco White), *Letters from Spain*, 1822, p. 358.

[2] Thus the traveller and belletrist J. G. Seume, a zealous deist and opponent of atheism, and a no less zealous patriot, penned many fiercely freethinking maxims, as: "Where were the most so-called positive religions, there was always the least morality"; "Grotius and the Bible are the best supports of despotism"; "Heaven has lost us the earth"; "The best apostles of despotism and slavery are the mystics." *Apokryphen*, 1806–1807, in *Sämmtliche Werke*, 1839, iv, 157, 173, 177, 219.

[3] C. H. Cottrell, *Religious Movements of Germany*, 1849, p. 12 *sq.*

[4] Cp. the author's *Evolution of States*, pp. 138–39.

But in time the spirit of progress regained strength, the most decisive form of recovery being the new development of the struggle for political liberty from about 1830 onwards. In England the advance thenceforward was to be broadly continuous on the political side. On the Continent it culminated for the time in the explosions of 1848, which were followed in the Germanic world by another political reaction, in which freethought suffered; and in France, after a few years, by the Second Empire, in which clericalism was again fostered. But these checks have proved impermanent.

The Forces of Renascence

As with the cause of democracy, so with the cause of rationalism, the forward movement grew only the deeper and more powerful through the check; and the nineteenth century closed on a record of freethinking progress which may be said to outbulk that of all the previous centuries of the modern era together. So great was the activity of the century in point of mere quantity that it is impossible, within the scheme of a "Short History," to treat it on even such a reduced scale of narrative as has been applied to the past. A detailed history on national lines from the French Revolution onwards would mean another book as large as the present. On however large a scale it might be written, further, it would involve a recognition of international influences such as had never before been evolved, save when on a much smaller scale the educated world all round read and wrote Latin. Since Goethe, the international aspect of culture upon which he laid stress has become ever more apparent; and scientific and philosophical thought, in particular, are world-wide in their scope and bearing. It must here suffice, therefore, to take a series of broad and general views of the past century's work, leaving adequate critical and narrative treatment for separate undertakings.[1] The most helpful method seems to be that of a conspectus (1) of the main movements and forces that during the century affected in varying degrees the thought of the civilized world, and (2) of the main advances made and the point reached in the culture of the nations, separately considered. At the same time,

1 When I thus planned the treatment of the nineteenth century in the first edition of this book, it was known to me that Mr. Alfred W. Benn had in hand a work on *The History of English Rationalism in the Nineteenth Century;* and the knowledge made me the more resolved to keep my own record condensed. Duly published in 1906 (Longmans. 2 vols.), Mr. Benn's book amply fulfilled expectations; and to it I would refer every reader who seeks a fuller survey than the present. Its freshness of thought and vigour of execution will more than repay him. Even Mr. Benn's copious work, however—devoting as it does a large amount of space to a preliminary survey of the eighteenth century—leaves room for various English monographs on the nineteenth, to say nothing of the culture history of a dozen other countries.

the forces of rationalism may be discriminated into Particular and General. We may then roughly represent the lines of movement, in non-chronological order, as follows:—

I.—*Forces of criticism and corrective thought bearing expressly on religious beliefs.*

1. In Great Britain and America, the new movements of popular freethought begun by Paine, and lasting continuously to the present day.

2. In France and elsewhere, the reverberation of the attack of Voltaire, d'Holbach, Dupuis, and Volney, carried on most persistently in Catholic countries by the Freemasons, as against official orthodoxy after 1815.

3. German "rationalism," proceeding from English deism, moving towards naturalist as against supernaturalist conceptions, dissolving the notion of the miraculous in both Old and New Testament history, analysing the literary structure of the sacred books, and all along affecting studious thought in other countries.

4. The literary compromise of Lessing, claiming for all religions a place in a scheme of "divine education."

5. In England, the neo-Christianity of the school of Coleridge, a disintegrating force, promoting the "Broad Church" tendency, which in Dean Milman was so pronounced as to bring on him charges of rationalism.

6. The utilitarianism of the school of Bentham, carried into moral and social science.

7. Comtism, making little direct impression on the "constructive" lines laid by the founder, but affecting critical thought in many directions.

8. German philosophy, Kantian and post-Kantian, in particular the Hegelian, turned to anti-Christian and anti-supernaturalist account by Strauss, Vatke, Bruno Bauer, Feuerbach, and Marx.

9. German atheism and scientific "materialism"—represented by Feuerbach and Büchner (who, however, rejected the term "materialism" as inappropriate).

10. Revived English deism, involving destructive criticism of Christianity, as in Hennell, F. W. Newman, R. W. Mackay, W. R. Greg, Theodore Parker, and Thomas Scott, partly in co-operation with Unitarianism.

11. American transcendentalism or pantheism—the school of Emerson.

12. Colenso's preliminary attack on the narrative of the Pentateuch, a systematized return to Voltairean common-sense, rectifying the unscientific course of the earlier "higher criticism" on the historical issue.

13. The later or scientific "higher criticism" of the Old Testament—represented by Kuenen, Wellhausen, and their successors.

14. New historical criticism of Christian origins, in particular the work of Strauss and Baur in Germany, Renan and Havet in France, and their successors.

15. Exhibition of rationalism within the churches, as in Germany, Holland, and Switzerland generally; in England in the *Essays and Reviews;* later in multitudes of essays and books, and in the ethical criticism of the Old Testament; in America in popular theology.

16. Association of rationalistic doctrine with the Socialist movements, new and old, from Owen to Bebel.

17. Communication of doubt and moral questioning through poetry and *belles-lettres*—as in Shelley, Byron, Coleridge, Clough, Tennyson, Carlyle, Arnold, Browning, Swinburne, Goethe, Schiller, Heine, Victor Hugo, Leconte de Lisle, Leopardi, and certain French and English novelists.

II.—*Modern Science, physical, mental, and moral, sapping the bases of all supernaturalist systems.*

1. Astronomy, newly directed by Laplace.
2. Geology, gradually connected (as in Britain by Chambers) with
3. Biology, made definitely non-deistic by Darwin.
4. The comprehension of all science in the Evolution Theory, as by Spencer, advancing on Comte.
5. Psychology, as regards localization of brain functions.
6. Comparative mythology, as yet imperfectly applied to Christism.
7. Sociology, as outlined by Comte, Buckle, Spencer, Winwood Reade, Lester Ward, Giddings, Tarde, Durkheim, and others, on strictly naturalistic lines.
8. Comparative Hierology; the methodical application of principles insisted on by all the deists, and formulated in the interests of deism by Lessing, but latterly freed of his implications.
9. Above all, the later development of Anthropology (in the wide English sense of the term), which, beginning to take shape in the eighteenth century, came to new life in the latter part of the nineteenth; and is now one of the most widely cultivated of all the sciences—especially on the side of religious creed and psychology.

On the other hand, we may group somewhat as follows the general forces of retardation of freethought operating throughout the century:—

1. Penal laws, still operative in Britain and Germany against popular freethought propaganda, and till recently in Britain against any endowment of freethought.
2. Class interests, involving in the first half of the century a social conspiracy against rationalism in England.
3. Commercial pressure thus set up, and always involved in the influence of churches.
4. In England, identification of orthodox Dissent with political Liberalism—a sedative.
5. Concessions by the clergy, especially in England and the United States—to many, another sedative.
6. Above all, the production of new masses of popular ignorance in the industrial nations, and continued lack of education in the others.
7. On this basis, business-like and in large part secular-minded organization of the endowed churches, as against a freethought propaganda hampered by the previously named causes, and in England by laws which veto all direct endowment of anti-Christian heresy.

It remains to make, with forced brevity, the surveys thus outlined.

Section 1.—Popular Propaganda and Culture

1. If any one circumstance more than another differentiates the life of to-day from that of older civilizations, or from that of previous centuries of the modern era, it is the diffusion of rationalistic views among the "common people." In no other era is to be found the

phenomenon of widespread critical skepticism among the labouring masses: in all previous ages, though chronic complaint is made of *some* unbelief among the uneducated, the constant and abject ignorance of the mass of the people has been the sure foothold of superstitious systems. Within the last century the area of the recognizably civilized world has grown far vaster; and in the immense populations that have thus arisen there is a relative degree of enlightenment, coupled with a degree of political power never before attained. Merely to survey, then, the broad movement of popular culture in the period in question will yield a useful notion of the dynamic change in the balance of thought in modern times, and will make more intelligible the special aspects of the culture process.

This vital change in the distribution of knowledge is largely to be attributed to the written and spoken teaching of a line of men who made popular enlightenment their great aim. Their leading type among the English-speaking races is THOMAS PAINE, whom we have seen combining a gospel of democracy with a gospel of critical reason in the midst of the French Revolution. Never before had rationalism been made widely popular. The English and French deists had written for the middle and upper classes. Peter Annet was practically the first who sought to reach the multitude; and his punishment expressed the special resentment aroused in the governing classes by such a policy. Of all the English freethinkers of the earlier deistical period he alone was selected for reprinting by the propagandists of the Paine period. Paine was to Annet, however, as a cannon to a musket, and through the democratic ferment of his day he won an audience a hundredfold wider than Annet could have dreamt of reaching. The anger of the governing classes, in a time of anti-democratic panic, was proportional. Paine would have been at least imprisoned for his *Rights of Man* had he not fled from England in time; and the sale of all his books was furiously prohibited and ferociously punished. Yet they circulated everywhere, even in Protestant Ireland,[1] hitherto affected only under the surface of upper-class life by deism. The circulation of Bishop Watson's *Apology* in reply only served to spread the contagion, as it brought the issues before multitudes who would not otherwise have heard of them.[2] All the while, direct propaganda was carried on by translations and reprints as well as by fresh English tractates. Diderot's *Thoughts on Religion*, and Fréret's *Letter from Thrasybulus to*

[1] Lecky, *Hist. of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. 1892, iii, 382.
[2] Cp. Conway's *Life of Paine*, ii, 252–53.

Leucippus, seem to have been great favourites among the Painites, as was Elihu Palmer's *Principles of Nature;* and Volney's *Ruins of Empires* had a large vogue. Condorcet's *Esquisse* had been promptly translated in 1795; the translation of d'Holbach's *System of Nature* reached a third edition in 1817;[1] that of Raynal's History had been reprinted in 1804; and that of Helvétius *On the Mind* in 1810; while an English abridgment of Bayle in four volumes, on freethinking lines, appeared in 1826.

2. Meantime, new writers arose to carry into fuller detail the attacks of Paine, sharpening their weapons on those of the more scholarly French deists. A *Life of Jesus, including his Apocryphal History*,[2] was published in 1818, with such astute avoidance of all comment that it escaped prosecution. Others, taking a more daring course, fared accordingly. George Houston translated the *Ecce Homo* of d'Holbach, first publishing it at Edinburgh in 1799, and reprinting it in London in 1813. For the second issue he was prosecuted, fined £200, and imprisoned for two years in Newgate. Robert Wedderburn, a mulatto calling himself "the Rev.," in reality a superannuated journeyman tailor who officiated in Hopkins Street Unitarian Chapel, London, was in 1820 sentenced to two years' imprisonment in Dorchester Jail for a "blasphemous libel" contained in one of his pulpit discourses. His Letters to the Rev. Solomon Herschell (the Jewish Chief Rabbi) and to the Archbishop of Canterbury show a happy vein of orderly irony and not a little learning, despite his profession of apostolic ignorance; and at the trial the judge admitted his defence to be "exceedingly well drawn up." His publications naturally received a new impetus, and passed to a more drastic order of mockery.

3. As the years went on, the persecution in England grew still fiercer; but it was met with a stubborn hardihood which wore out even the bitter malice of piety. One of the worst features of the religious crusade was that it affected to attack not unbelief but "vice," such being the plea on which Wilberforce and others prosecuted, during a period of more than twenty years, the publishers and booksellers who issued the works of Paine.[3] But even that dissembling device did not ultimately avail. A name not to be

[1] This translation, issued by "Sherwood, Neely, and Jones, Paternoster Row, and all booksellers," purports to be "with additions." The translation, however, has altered d'Holbach's atheism to deism.

[2] By W. Huttman. The book is "embellished with a head of Jesus"—a conventional religious picture. Huttman's opinions may be divined from the last sentence of his preface, alluding to "the high pretentions and inflated stile of the lives of Christ which issue periodically from the English press."

[3] Cp. *Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 208–209.

forgotten by those who value obscure service to human freedom is that of RICHARD CARLILE, who between 1819 and 1835 underwent nine years' imprisonment in his unyielding struggle for the freedom of the Press, of thought, and of speech.[1] John Clarke, an ex-Methodist, became one of Carlile's shopmen, was tried in 1824 for selling one of his publications, and "after a spirited defence, in which he read many of the worst passages of the Bible," was sentenced to three years' imprisonment, and to find securities for good behaviour during life. The latter disability he effectively anticipated by writing, while in prison, *A Critical Review of the Life, Character, and Miracles of Jesus*, wherein Christian feelings were treated as Christians had treated the feelings of freethinkers, with a much more destructive result. Published first, strangely enough, in the *Newgate Magazine*, it was republished in 1825 and 1839, with impunity. Thus did a brutal bigotry bring upon itself ever a deadlier retaliation, till it sickened of the contest. Those who threw up the struggle on the orthodox side declaimed as before about the tone of the unbeliever's attack, failing to read the plain lesson that, while noisy fanaticism, doing its own worst and vilest, deterred from utterance all the gentler and more sympathetic spirits on the side of reason, the work of reason could be done only by the harder natures, which gave back blow for blow and insult for insult, rejoicing in the encounter. Thus championed, freethought could not be crushed. The propagandist and publishing work done by Carlile was carried on diversely by such free lances as ROBERT TAYLOR (ex-clergyman, author of the *Diegesis*, 1829, and *The Devil's Pulpit*, 1830), CHARLES SOUTHWELL (1814–1860), and William Hone,[2] who ultimately became an independent preacher. Southwell, a disciple of Robert Owen, who edited *The Oracle of Reason*, was imprisoned for a year in 1840 for publishing in that journal an article entitled "The Jew Book"; and was succeeded in the editorship by GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE (1817–1906), another Owenite missionary, who met a similar sentence; whereafter George Adams and his wife, who continued to publish the journal, were imprisoned in turn. Matilda Roalfe and Mrs. Emma Martin about

[1] See Harriet Martineau's *History of the Peace*, ed. 1877, ii, 87, and Mrs. Carlile Campbell's *The Battle of the Press* (Bonner, 1899), passim, as to the treatment of those who acted as Carlile's shopmen. Women were imprisoned as well as men—*e.g.* SUSANNA WRIGHT, as to whom see Wheeler's *Dictionary*, and last ref. Carlile's wife and sister were likewise imprisoned with him; and over twenty volunteer shopmen in all went to jail.

[2] Hone's most important service to popular culture was his issue of the *Apocryphal New Testament*, which, by co-ordinating work of the same kind, gave a fresh scientific basis to the popular criticism of the gospel history. As to his famous trial for blasphemy on the score of his having published certain parodies, political in intention, see bk. i, ch. x (by Knight) of Harriet Martineau's *History of the Peace*.

the same period underwent imprisonment for like causes.[1] In this fashion, by the steady courage of a much-enduring band of men and women, was set on foot a systematic Secularist propaganda—the name having relation to the term "Secularism," coined by Holyoake.

4. In this evolution political activities played an important part. Henry Hetherington (1792–1849), the strenuous democrat who in 1830 began the trade union movement, and so became the founder of Chartism, fought for the right of publication in matters of free-thought as in politics. After undergoing two imprisonments of six months each (1832), and carrying on for three and a half years the struggle for an untaxed Press, which ended in his victory (1834), he was in 1840 indicted for publishing *Haslam's Letters to the Clergy of all Denominations*, a freethinking criticism of Old Testament morality. He defended himself so ably that Lord Denman, the judge, confessed to have "listened with feelings of great interest and sentiments of respect too"; and Justice Talfourd later spoke of the defence as marked by "great propriety and talent." Nevertheless, he was punished by four months' imprisonment.[2] In the following year, on the advice of Francis Place, he brought a test prosecution for blasphemy against Moxon, the poet-publisher, for issuing Shelley's complete works, including *Queen Mab*. Talfourd, then Serjeant, defended Moxon, and pleaded that there "must be some alteration of the law, or some restriction of the right to put it in action"; but the jury were impartial enough to find the publisher guilty, though he received no punishment.[3] Among other works published by Hetherington was one entitled *A Hunt after the Devil*, "by Dr. P. Y." (really by Lieutenant Lecount), in which the story of Noah's ark was subjected to a destructive criticism.[4]

5. Holyoake had been a missionary and martyr in the movement of Socialism set up by ROBERT OWEN, whose teaching, essentially scientific on its psychological or philosophical side, was the first effort to give systematic effect to democratic ideals by organizing industry. It was in the discussions of the "Association of all Classes of all Nations," formed by Owen in 1835, that the word "Socialism" first became current.[5] Owen was a freethinker in all things;[6] and his whole movement was so penetrated by an anti-theological spirit that the clergy as a rule became its bitter enemies, though such publicists as Macaulay and John Mill also combined

1 Holyoake, *Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life*, i, 109–10. See p. 111 as to other cases.
2 Art. by Holyoake in *Dict. of Nat. Biog.* Cp. *Sixty Years*, per index.
3 Articles in *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*
4 Holyoake, *Sixty Years*, i, 47.
5 Kirkup, *History of Socialism*, 1892, p. 64.
6 "From an early age he had lost all belief in the prevailing forms of religion" (Kirkup, p. 59).

with them in scouting it on political and economic grounds.[1] Up till the middle of 1817 he had on his side a large body of "respectable" and highly-placed philanthropists, his notable success in his own social and commercial undertakings being his main recommendation. His early *Essays on the Formation of Character*, indeed, were sufficient to reveal his heterodoxy; but not until, at his memorable public meeting on August 21, 1817, he began to expatiate on "the gross errors that have been combined with the fundamental notions of every religion that has hitherto been taught to men"[2] did he rank as an aggressive freethinker. It was in his own view the turning-point of his life. He was not prosecuted; though Brougham declared that if any politician had said half as much he would have been "burned alive"; but the alienation of "moderate" opinion at once began; and Owen, always more fervid than prudent, never recovered his influence among the upper classes. Nonetheless, "his secularistic teaching gained such influence among the working classes as to give occasion for the statement in the *Westminster Review* (1839) that his principles were the actual creed of a great portion of them."[3]

Owen's polemic method—if it could properly be so called—was not so much a criticism of dogma as a calm impeachment of religion in a spirit of philanthropy. No reformer was ever more entirely free from the spirit of wrath: on this side Owen towers above comparison. "There is no place found in him for scorn or indignation. He cannot bring himself to speak or think evil of any man. He carried out in his daily life his own teaching that man is not the proper object of praise or blame. Throughout his numerous works there is hardly a sentence of indignation—of personal denunciation never. He loves the sinner, and can hardly bring himself to hate the sin."[4] He had come by his rationalism through the influence rather of Rousseau than of Voltaire; and he had assimilated the philosophic doctrine of determinism—of all ideals the most difficult to realize in conduct—with a thoroughness of which the flawed Rousseau was incapable. There was thus presented to the world the curious case of a man who on the side of character carried rationalism to the perfection of ideal "saintliness," while in the general application of rational thought to concrete problems he was virtually unteachable. For an absolute and immovable conviction

[1] Reformers of almost all schools, indeed, from the first regarded Owen with more or less genial incredulity, some criticizing him acutely without any ill-will. See Podmore's *Robert Owen*, 1906, i, 238-42. Southey was one of the first to detect his lack of religious belief. *Id.* p. 222, *n.*

[2] Podmore, i, 246. [3] Kirkup, as cited, p. 64. [4] Podmore, ii, 640.

in his own practical rightness was in Owen as essential a constituent as his absolute benevolence.[1] These were the two poles of his personality. He was, in short, a fair embodiment of the ideal formed by many people—doctrine and dogma apart—of the Gospel Jesus. And most Christians accordingly shunned and feared or hated him.

Such a personality was evidently a formidable force as against the reinforced English orthodoxy of the first generation of the nineteenth century. The nature of Owen's propaganda as against religion may be best sampled from his lecture, "*The New Religion:* or, Religion founded on the Immutable Laws of the Universe, contrasted with all Religions founded on Human Testimony," delivered at the London Tavern on October 20, 1830:[2]—

"Under the arrangements which have hitherto existed for educating and governing man, four general characters have been produced among the human race. These four characters appear to be formed, under the past and present arrangements of society, from four different original organizations at birth.....

"No. 1. May be termed the conscientious religious in all countries.

"No. 2. Unbelievers in the truth of any religion, but who strenuously support the religion of their country, under the conviction that, although religion is not necessary to insure their own good conduct, it is eminently required to compel others to act right.

"No. 3. Unbelievers who openly avow their disbelief in the truth of any religion, such as Deists, Atheists, Skeptics, etc., etc., but who do not perceive the laws of nature relative to man as an individual, or when united in a social state.

"No. 4. Disbelievers in all past and present religions, but believers in the eternal unchanging laws of the universe, as developed by facts derived from all past experience; and who, by a careful study of these facts, deduce from them the religion of nature.

"Class No. 1 is formed, under certain circumstances, from those original organizations which possess at birth strong moral and weak intellectual faculties.....Class No. 2 is composed of those individuals who by nature possess a smaller quantity of moral and a larger quantity of intellectual faculty.....Class No. 3 is composed of men of strong moral and moderate intellectual faculty.....Class No. 4 comprises those who, by nature, possess a high degree of intellectual and moral faculty....."

Thus all forms of opinion were shown to proceed either from intellectual or moral defect, save the opinions of Owen. Such

[1] "Extraordinary self-complacency," "autocratic action," "arrogance," are among the expressions used of him by his ablest biographer. (Podmore, ii, 641.) Of him might be said, as of Emerson by himself, "the children of the Gods do not argue"—the faculty being absent.

[2] Pamphlet sold at 1½d., and "to be had of all the Booksellers."

propositions, tranquilly elaborated, were probably as effective in producing irritation as any frontal attack upon any dogmas, narratives, or polities. But, though not even consistent (inasmuch as the fundamental thesis that "character is formed by circumstances" is undermined by the datum of four varieties of organization), they were potent to influence serious men otherwise broadly instructed as to the nature of religious history and the irrationality of dogma; and Owen for a generation, despite the inevitable failure and frustration of his social schemes, exercised by his movement a very wide influence on popular life. To a considerable extent it was furthered by the popular deistic philosophy of GEORGE and ANDREW COMBE —a kind of deistic positivism—which then had a great vogue;[1] and by the implications of phrenology, then also in its most scientific and progressive stage. When, for various reasons, Owen's movement dissolved, the freethinking element seems to have been absorbed in the secular party, while the others appear to have gone in large part to build up the movement of Co-operation. On the whole, the movement of popular freethought in England could be described as poor, struggling, and persecuted, only the most hardy and zealous venturing to associate themselves with it. The imprisonment of Holyoake (1842) for six months, on a trifling charge of blasphemy, is an illustration of the brutal spirit of public orthodoxy at the time.[2] Where bigotry could thus only injure and oppress without suppressing heresy, it stimulated resistance; and the result of the stimulus was a revival of popular propaganda which led to the founding of a Secular Society in 1852.

6. This date broadly coincides with the maximum domination of conventional orthodoxy in English life. From about the middle of the century the balance gradually changes. In 1852 we find the publisher Henry Bohn reissuing the worthless apologetic works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller, with a "publisher's preface" in which they are said to "maintain an acknowledged pre-eminence," though written "at a period of our national history when the writings of Volney and Gibbon, and especially of Thomas Paine, fostered by the political effects of the French Revolution, had deteriorated the morals of the people, and infused the poison of infidelity into the disaffected portion of the public." We have here still the note of early-nineteenth-century Anglican respectability, not easily to be matched in human history for hollowness and blatancy. Fuller is

[1] Of George Combe's *Constitution of Man* (1828), a deistic work, over 50,000 copies were sold in Britain within twelve years, and 10,000 in America. Advt. to 4th ed. 1839. Combe avows that his impulse came from the phrenologist Spurzheim.

[2] See the details in his *Last Trial by Jury for Atheism in England.*

at once one of the most rabid and one of the most futile of the thousand and one defenders of the faith. A sample of his mind and method is the verdict that "If the light that is gone abroad on earth would permit the rearing of temples to Venus, or Bacchus, or any of the rabble of heathen deities, there is little doubt but that modern unbelievers would in great numbers become their devotees; but, seeing they cannot have a God whose worship shall accord with their inclinations, they seem determined not to worship at all."[1] In the very next year the same publisher began the issue of a reprint of Gibbon, with variorum notes, edited by "An English Churchman," who for the most part defended Gibbon against his orthodox critics. This enterprise in turn brought upon the pious publisher a fair share of odium. But the second half of the century, albeit soon darkened by new wars in Europe, Asia, and America, was to be for England one of Liberalism alike in politics and in thought, free trade, and relatively free publication, with progress in enlightenment for both the populace and the "educated" classes.

7. In 1858 there was elected to the presidency of the London Secular Society the young CHARLES BRADLAUGH, one of the greatest orators of his age, and one of the most powerful personalities ever associated with a progressive movement. Early experience of clerical persecution, which even drove the boy from his father's roof, helped to make him a fighter, but never infirmed his humanity. In the main self-taught, he acquired a large measure of culture in French and English, and his rare natural gift for debate was sharpened by a legal training. A personal admirer of Owen, he never accepted his social polity, but was at all times the most zealous of democratic reformers. Thenceforward the working masses in England were in large part kept in touch with a freethought which drew on the results of the scientific and scholarly research of the time, and wielded a dialectic of which trained opponents confessed the power.[2] In the place of the bland dogmatism of Owen, and the calm assumption that all mankind could and should be schoolmastered into happiness and order, there came the alert recognition of the absoluteness of individualism as regards conviction, and its present pre-potency as regards social arrangements. Every thesis was brought to the test of argument and evidence; and in due course many who had complained that Owen would not

[1] *The Gospel its Own Witness*, 1799, rep. in Bohn's ed. of *The Principal Works and Remains of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 1852, pp. 136–37.

[2] See Prof. Flint's tribute to the reasoning power of Bradlaugh and Holyoake in his *Anti-Theistic Theories*, 4th ed. pp. 518–19.

argue, complained that the new school argued everything. The essential thing was that the people were receiving vitally needed instruction; and were being taught with a new power to think for themselves. Incidentally they were freed from an old burden by Bradlaugh's successful resistance to the demand of suretyship from newspapers, and by his no less successful battle for the right of non-theistic witnesses to make affirmation instead of taking the oath in the law courts.[1]

The inspiration and the instruction of the popular movement thus maintained were at once literary, scientific, ethical, historical, scholarly, and philosophic. Shelley was its poet; Voltaire its first story-teller; and Gibbon its favourite historian. In philosophy, Bradlaugh learned less from Hume than from Spinoza; in Biblical criticism—himself possessing a working knowledge of Hebrew—he collated the work of English and French specialists, down to and including Colenso, applying all the while to the consecrated record the merciless tests of a consistent ethic. At the same time, the whole battery of argument from the natural sciences was turned against traditionalism and supernaturalism, alike in the lectures of Bradlaugh and the other speakers of his party, and in the pages of his journal, *The National Reformer*. The general outcome was an unprecedented diffusion of critical thought among the English masses, and a proportionate antagonism to those who had wrought such a result. When, therefore, Bradlaugh, as deeply concerned for political as for intellectual righteousness, set himself to the task of entering Parliament, he commenced a struggle which shortened his life, though it promoted his main objects. Not till after a series of electoral contests extending over twelve years was he elected for Northampton in 1880; and the House of Commons in a manner enacted afresh the long resistance made to him in that city.[2] When, however, on his election in 1880, the Conservative Opposition began the historic proceedings over the Oath question, they probably did even more to deepen and diffuse the popular freethought movement than Bradlaugh himself had done in the whole of his previous career. The process was furthered by the policy of prosecuting and imprisoning (1883) Mr. G. W. Foote, editor of the *Freethinker*, under the Blasphemy Laws—a course not directly ventured on as against Bradlaugh, though it was sought to connect him with the publication of Mr. Foote's journal.

[1] See Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner's *Charles Bradlaugh*, i, 149, 288–89.
[2] For a full record see Part II of Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner's *Charles Bradlaugh*.

To this day it is common to give a false account of the origin of the episode, representing Bradlaugh as having "forced" his opinions on the attention of the House. Rather he strove unduly to avoid wounding religious feeling. Wont to make affirmation by law in the courts of justice, he held that the same law applied to the "oath of allegiance," and felt that it would be unseemly on his part to use the words of adjuration if he could legally affirm. On this point he expressly consulted the law officers of the Crown, and they gave the opinion that he had the legal right, which was his own belief as a lawyer. The faction called the "fourth party," however, saw an opportunity to embarrass the Gladstone Government by challenging the act of affirmation, and thus arose the protracted struggle. Only when a committee of the House decided that he could not properly affirm did Bradlaugh propose to take the oath, in order to take his seat.

The pretence of zeal for religion, made by the politicians who had raised the issue, was known by all men to be the merest hypocrisy. Lord Randolph Churchill, who distinguished himself by insisting on the moral necessity for a belief in "some divinity or other," is recorded to have professed a special esteem for Mr. (now Lord) Morley, the most distinguished Positivist of his time.[1] The whole procedure, in Parliament and out, was so visibly that of the lowest political malice, exploiting the crudest religious intolerance, that it turned into active freethinkers many who had before been only passive doubters, and raised the secularist party to an intensity of zeal never before seen. At no period in modern British history had there been so constant and so keen a platform propaganda of unbelief; so unsparing an indictment of Christian doctrine, history, and practice; such contemptuous rebuttal of every Christian pretension; such asperity of spirit against the creed which was once more being championed by chicanery, calumny, and injustice. In those five years of indignant warfare were sown the seeds of a more abundant growth of rationalism than had ever before been known in the British Islands. With invincible determination Bradlaugh fought his case through Parliament and the law courts, incurring debts which forced upon him further toils that clearly shortened his life, but never yielding for an instant in his battle with the bigotry of half the nation. Liberalism was shamed by many defections; Conservatism, with the assent of Mr. Balfour, was solid for injustice;[2] and in the entire Church of England less

[1] After Bradlaugh had secured his seat, the noble lord even sought his acquaintance.
[2] Though young Conservative members, after 1886, privately professed sympathy.

than a dozen priests stood for tolerance. But the cause at stake was indestructible. When Bradlaugh at length took the oath and his seat in 1886, under a ruling of the new Speaker (Peel) which stultified the whole action of the Speaker and majorities of the previous Parliament, and no less that of the law courts, straightforward freethought stood three-fold stronger in England than in any previous generation. Apart from their educative work, the struggles and sufferings of the secularist leaders won for Great Britain the abolition within one generation of the old burden of suretyship on newspapers, and of the disabilities of non-theistic witnesses; the freedom of public meeting in the London parks; the right of avowed atheists to sit in Parliament (Bradlaugh having secured in 1888 their title to make affirmation instead of oath); and the virtual discredit of the Blasphemy Laws as such. It is probable also that the treatment meted out to Mrs. BESANT—then associated with Bradlaugh in freethought propaganda—marked the end of another form of tyrannous outrage, already made historic in the case of Shelley. Secured the custody of her children under a marital deed of separation, she was deprived of it at law (1879) on her avowal of atheistic opinions, with the result that her influence as a propagandist was immensely increased.

8. The special energy of the English secularist movement in the ninth decade was partly due to the fact that by that time there had appeared a remarkable amount of modern freethinking literature of high literary and intellectual quality, and good "social" status. Down to 1870 the new literary names committed to the rejection of Christianity, apart from the men of science who kept to their own work, were the theists Hennell, F. W. Newman, W. R. Greg, R. W. Mackay, Buckle, and W. E. H. Lecky, all of them influential, but none of them at once recognized as a first-rate force. But with the appearance of Lecky's *History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe* (1865), lacking though it was in clearness of thought, a new tone began to prevail; and his *History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne* (1869), equally readable and not more uncompromising, was soon followed by a series of powerful pronouncements of a more explicit kind. One of the first of the literary class to come forward with an express impeachment of Christianity was MONCURE DANIEL CONWAY, whose *Earthward Pilgrimage* (1870) was the artistic record of a gifted preacher's progress from Wesleyan Methodism, through Unitarianism, to a theism which was soon to pass into agnosticism. In 1871 appeared the remarkable work of WINWOOD READE, *The*

Martyrdom of Man, wherein a rapid survey of ancient and medieval history, and of the growth of religion from savage beginnings, leads up to a definitely anti-theistic presentment of the future of human life with the claim to have shown "that the destruction of Christianity is essential to the interests of civilization."[1] Some eighteen editions tell of the acceptance won by the book. Less vogue, but some startled notice, was won by the Duke of Somerset's *Christian Theology and Modern Scepticism* (1872), a work of moderate rationalism, but by a peer. In 1873 appeared HERBERT SPENCER'S *Introduction to the Study of Sociology*, wherein the implicit anti-supernaturalism of that philosopher's *First Principles* was advanced upon, in the chapter on "The Theological Bias," by a mordant attack on that Christian creed.

That attack had been preceded by Matthew Arnold's *Literature and Dogma* (1872), wherein the publicist who had censured Colenso for not writing in Latin described the Christian doctrine of the Trinity as "the fairy-tale of three Lord Shaftesburys." Much pleading for the recognition by unbelievers of the value of the Bible failed to convince Christians of the value of such a thinker's Christianity. A more important sensation was provided in 1873 by the posthumous publication of Mill's *Autobiography*, and, in the following year, by his *Three Essays on Religion*, which exhibited its esteemed author as not only not a Christian but as never having been one, although he formulated a species of limited liability theism, as unsatisfactory to the rationalists as to the orthodox. Still the fresh manifestations of freethinking multiplied. On the one hand the massive treatise entitled *Supernatural Religion* (1874), and on the other the freethinking essays of Prof. W. K. Clifford in the *Fortnightly Review*, the most vigorously outspoken ever yet written by an English academic, showed that the whole field of debate was being reopened with a new power and confidence. The *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, by Leslie Stephen (1876), set up the same impression from another side; yet another social sensation was created by the appearance of Viscount AMBERLEY'S *Analysis of Religious Belief* (1877); and all the while the "Higher Criticism" proceeded within the pale of the Church.

The literary situation was now so changed that, whereas from 1850 to 1880 the "sensations" in the religious world were those made by rationalistic attacks, thereafter they were those made by new defences. H. Drummond's *Natural Law in the Spiritual World* (1883), Mr.

[1] Work cited, p. 524.

Balfour's *Defence of Philosophic Doubt* (1879) and *Foundations of Belief* (1895), and Mr. Kidd's *Social Evolution* (1894), were successively welcomed as being declared to render such a service. It is doubtful whether they are to-day valued upon that score in any quarter.

9. In the first half of the century popular forms of freethought propaganda were hardly possible in other European countries. France had been too long used to regulation alike under the monarchy and under the empire to permit of open promotion of unbelief in the early years of the Restoration. Yet as early as 1828 we find the Protestant Coquerel avowing that in his day the Bourbonism of the Catholic clergy had revived the old anti-clericalism, and that it was common to find the most high-minded patriots unbelievers and materialists.[1] But still more remarkable was the persistence of deep freethinking currents in the Catholic world throughout the century. About 1830 rationalism had become normal among the younger students at Paris;[2] and the revolution of that year elicited a charter putting all religions on an equality.[3] Soon the throne and the chambers were on a footing of practical hostility to the Church.[4] Under Louis Philippe men dared to teach in the Collège de France that "the Christian dispensation is but *one* link in the chain of divine revelations to man."[5] Even during the first period of reaction after the restoration numerous editions of Volney's *Ruines* and of the *Abrégé*[6] of Dupuis's *Origine de tous les Cultes* served to maintain among the more intelligent of the proletariat an almost scientific rationalism, which can hardly be said to have been improved on by such historiography as that of Renan's *Vie de Jésus*. And there were other forces, over and above freemasonry, which in France and other Latin countries has since the Revolution been steadily anti-clerical. The would-be social reconstructor CHARLES FOURIER (1772–1837) was an independent and non-Christian though not an anti-clerical theist, and his system may have counted for something as organizing the secular spirit among the workers in the period of the monarchic and Catholic reaction. Fourier approximated to Christianity inasmuch as he believed in a divine Providence; but like Owen he had an unbounded and heterodox faith in human

[1] Coquerel, *Essai sur l'histoire générale du christianisme*, 1828, préf.
[2] Dr. Christopher Wordsworth, *Diary in France*, 1845, pp. 75–77.
[3] "The miserable and deistical principle of the *equality* of *all* religions" (*id.* p. 188). Cp. pp. 151, 153.
[4] *Id.* pp. 15, 37, 45, 181, 185, 190.
[5] *Id.* pp. 157–61. As to the general vogue of rationalism in France at that period, see pp. 35, 204: and compare Saisset, *Essais sur la philosophie et la religion*, 1845; *The Progress of Religious Thought as illustrated in the Protestant Church of France*, by Dr. J. R. Beard, 1861; and Wilson's article in *Essays and Reviews*. As to Switzerland and Holland, see Pearson, *Infidelity, its Aspects*, etc., 1853, pp. 560–64, 575–84.
[6] Louis Philippe sought to suppress this book, of which many editions had appeared before 1830. See Blanco White's *Life*, 1845, ii, 168.

goodness and perfectibility; and he claimed to have discovered the "plan of God" for men. But Fourier was never, like Owen, a popular force; and popular rationalism went on other lines. At no time was the proletariat of Paris otherwise than largely Voltairean after the Revolution, of which one of the great services (carried on by Napoleon) was an improvement in popular education. The rival non-Christian systems of SAINT-SIMON (1760–1823) and AUGUSTE COMTE (1798–1857) also never took any practical hold among them; but throughout the century they have been fully the most free-thinking working-class population in the world.

As to Fourier see the *Œuvres Choisies de Fourier*, ed. Ch. Gide, pp. 1–3, 9. Cp. *Solidarité : Vue Synthétique sur la doctrine de Ch. Fourier*, par Hippolyte Renaud, 3e édit. 1846, ch. i: "Pour ramener l'homme à la foi" [en Dieu], writes Renaud, "il faut lui offrir aujourd'hui une foi complète et composée, une foi solidement assise sur le témoignage de la raison. Pour cela il faut que la flambeau de la science dissipe toutes les obscurités" (p. 9). This is not propitious to dogma; but Fourier planned and promised to leave priests and ministers undisturbed in his new world, and even declared religions to be "much superior to uncertain sciences." Gide, introd. to *Œuvres Choisies*, pp. xxii–xxiii, citing Manuscrits, vol. de 1853–1856, p. 293. Cp. Dr. Ch. Pellarin, *Fourier, sa vie et sa théorie*, 5e édit. p. 143.

Saint-Simon, who proposed a "new Christianity," expressly guarded against direct appeals to the people. See Weil, *Saint-Simon et son Œuvre*, 1894, p. 193. As to the Saint-Simonian sect, see an interesting testimony by Renan, *Les Apôtres*, p. 148.

The generation after the fall of Napoleon was pre-eminently the period of new schemes of society; and it is noteworthy that they were all non-Christian, though all, including even Owen's, claimed to provide a "religion," and the French may seem all to have been convinced by Napoleon's practice that some kind of cult must be provided for the peoples. Owen alone rejected alike supernaturalism and cultus; and his movement left the most definite rationalistic traces. All seem to have been generated by the double influence of (1) the social failure of the French Revolution, which left so many anxious for another and better effort at reconstruction, and (2) of the spectacle of the rule of Napoleon, which seems to have elicited new ideals of beneficent autocracy. Owen, Fourier, Saint-Simon, and Comte were all alike would-be founders of a new society or social religion. It seems probable that this proclivity to systematic reconstruction, in a world which still carried a panic-memory of one great social overturn, helped to lengthen the rule of orthodoxy.

Considerably more progress was made when freethought became detached from special plans of polity, and grew up anew by way of sheer truth-seeking on all the lines of inquiry.

In France, however, the freethinking tradition from the eighteenth century never passed away, at least as regards the life of the great towns. And while Napoleon III made it his business to conciliate the Church, which in the person of the somewhat latitudinarian Darboy, Archbishop of Paris, had endorsed his *coup d'état* of 1851,[1] even under his rule the irreversible movement of freethought revealed itself among his own ministers. Victor Duruy, the eminent historian, his energetic Minister of Education, was a freethinker, non-aggressive towards the Church, but perfectly determined not to permit aggression by it.[2] And when the Church, in its immemorial way, declaimed against all forms of rationalistic teaching in the colleges, and insisted on controlling the instruction in all the schools,[3] his firm resistance made him one of its most hated antagonists. Even in the Senate, then the asylum of all forms of antiquated thought and prejudice, Duruy was able to carry his point against the prelates, Sainte-Beuve strongly and skilfully supporting him.[4] Thus in the France of the Third Empire, on the open field of the educational battle-ground between faith and reason, the rationalistic advance was apparent in administration no less than in the teaching of the professed men of science and the polemic of the professed critics of religion.

10. In other Catholic countries the course of popular culture in the first half of the century was not greatly dissimilar to that seen in France, though less rapid and expansive. Thus we find the Spanish Inquisitor-General in 1815 declaring that "all the world sees with horror the rapid progress of unbelief," and denouncing "the errors and the new and dangerous doctrines" which have passed from other countries to Spain.[5] This evolution was to some extent checked; but in the latter half of the century, especially in the last thirty years, all the Catholic countries of Europe were more or less permeated with demotic freethought, usually going hand in hand with republican or socialistic propaganda in politics. It is indeed a significant fact that freethought propaganda is often most active in countries where the Catholic Church is most powerful. Thus in Belgium there are at least three separate federations,

[1] Prof. E. Lavisse, *Un Ministre: Victor Duruy*, 1895 (rep. of art. in *Revue de Paris*, Janv. 15 and Mars 1, 1895), p. 117.
[2] *Id.* pp. 99–105. [3] *Id.* pp. 107–118. [4] *Id.* pp. 118–27.
[5] Llorente, *Hist. crit. de l'Inquisition de l'Espagne*, 2e édit. iv, 153.

standing for hundreds of freethinking "groups"; in Spain, a few years ago, there were freethought societies in all the large towns, and at least half-a-dozen freethought journals; in Portugal there have been a number of societies—a weekly journal, *O Secolo*, of Lisbon, and a monthly review, *O Livre Exame*. In France and Italy, where educated society is in large measure rationalistic, the Masonic lodges do most of the personal and social propaganda; but there are federations of freethought societies in both countries. In Switzerland freethought is more aggressive in the Catholic than in the Protestant cantons.[1] In the South American republics, again, as in Italy and France, the Masonic lodges are predominantly freethinking; and in Peru there was, a few years ago, a Freethought League, with a weekly organ. As long ago as 1856 the American diplomatist and archæologist, Squier, wrote that, "Although the people of Honduras, in common with those of Central America in general, are nominally Catholics, yet, among those capable of reflection or possessed of education, there are more who are destitute of any fixed creed—Rationalists or, as they are sometimes called, Freethinkers, than adherents of any form of religion."[2] That the movement is also active in the other republics of the southern continent may be inferred from the facts that a Positivist organization has long subsisted in Brazil; that its members were active in the peaceful revolution which there substituted a republic for a monarchy; and that at the Freethought Congresses of Rome and Paris in 1904 and 1905 there was an energetic demand for a Congress at Buenos Aires, which was finally agreed to for 1906.

While popular propaganda is hardly possible save on political lines, freethinking journalism has counted for much in the most Catholic parts of Southern Europe. The influence of such journals is to be measured not by their circulation, which is never great, but by their keeping up a habit of more or less instructed freethinking among readers, to many of whom the instruction is not otherwise easily accessible. Probably the least ambitious of them is an intellectual force of a higher order than the highest grade of popular religious journalism; while some of the stronger, as *De Dageraad* of Amsterdam, have ranked as high-class serious reviews. In the more free and progressive countries, however, freethought affects all periodical literature; and in France it partly permeates the ordinary newspapers. In England, where a series of monthly or weekly publications of an emphatically freethinking sort has been

[1] *Rapport* of Ch. Fulpius in the *Almanach de Libre Pensée*, 1906.
[2] Squier, *Notes on Central America*, 1856, p. 227.

nearly continuous from about 1840,[1] new ones rising in place of those which succumbed to the commercial difficulties, such periodicals suffer an economic pinch in that they cannot hope for much income from advertisements, which are the chief sustenance of popular journals and magazines. The same law holds elsewhere; but in England and America the high-priced reviews have been gradually opened to rationalistic articles, the way being led by the English *Westminster Review*[2] and *Fortnightly Review*, both founded with an eye to freer discussion.

Among the earlier freethinking periodicals may be noted *The Republican*, 1819–26 (edited by Carlile); *The Deist's Magazine*, 1820; *The Lion*, 1828 (Carlile); *The Prompter*, 1830 (Carlile); *The Gauntlet*, 1833 (Carlile); *The Atheist and Republican*, 1841–42; *The Blasphemer*, 1842; *The Oracle of Reason* (founded by Southwell), 1842, etc.; *The Reasoner* and *Herald of Progress* (largely conducted by Holyoake), 1846–1861; *Cooper's Journal; or, unfettered Thinker*, etc., 1850, etc.; *The Movement*, 1843; *The Freethinker's Information for the People* (undated: after 1840); *Freethinker's Magazine*, 1850, etc.; *London Investigator*, 1854, etc. Bradlaugh's *National Reformer*, begun in 1860, lasted till 1893. Mr. Foote's *Freethinker*, begun in 1881, still subsists. Various freethinking monthlies have risen and fallen since 1880—*e.g.*, *Our Corner*, edited by Mrs. Besant, 1883–88; *The Liberal* and *Progress*, edited by Mr. Foote, 1879–87; the *Free Review*, transformed into the *University Magazine*, 1893–1898. The *Reformer*, a monthly, edited by Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, subsisted from 1897 to 1904. *The Literary Guide*, which began as a small sheet in 1885, flourishes. Since 1900, a popular Socialist journal, *The Clarion*, has declared for rationalism through the pen of its editor, Mr. R. Blatchford ("Nunquam"), whose polemic has caused much controversy. For a generation back, further, rationalistic essays have appeared from time to time not only in the *Fortnightly Review* (founded by G. H. Lewes, and long edited by Mr. John (now Lord) Morley, much of whose writing on the French *philosophes* appeared in its pages), but in the *Nineteenth Century*, wherein was carried on, for instance, the famous controversy between Mr. Gladstone and Prof. Huxley. In the early 'seventies, the *Cornhill Magazine*, under the editorship of Leslie Stephen,

[1] Before 1840 the popular freethought propaganda had been partly carried on under cover of Radicalism, as in Carlile's *Republican*, and *Lion*, and in various publications of William Hone. Cp. H. B. Wilson's article "The National Church," in *Essays and Reviews*, 9th ed. p. 152.

[2] Described as "our chief atheistic organ" by the late F. W. Newman "because Dr. James Martineau declined to continue writing for it, *because* it interpolated atheistical articles between his theistic articles" (*Contributions.....to the early history of the late Cardinal Newman*, 1891, p. 103). The review was for a time edited by J. S. Mill, and for long after him by Dr. John Chapman. It lasted into the twentieth century, under the editorship of Dr. Chapman's widow, and kept a free platform to the end.

issued serially Matthew Arnold's *Literature and Dogma* and *St. Paul and Protestantism.* In the latter years of the century quite a number of reviews, some of them short-lived, gave space to advanced opinions. But propaganda has latterly become more and more a matter of all-pervading literary influence, the immense circulation of the sixpenny reprints of the R. P. A. having put the advanced literature of the last generation within the reach of all.

11. In Germany, as we have seen, the relative selectness of culture, the comparative aloofness of the "enlightened" from the mass of the people, made possible after the War of Independence a certain pietistic reaction, in the absence of any popular propagandist machinery or purpose on the side of the rationalists. In the opinion of an evangelical authority, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, "through modern enlightenment (*Aufklärung*) the people had become indifferent to the Church; the Bible was regarded as a merely human book, the Saviour merely as a person who had lived and taught long ago, not as one whose almighty presence is with his people still."[1] According to the same authority, "before the war, the indifference to the word of God which prevailed among the upper classes had penetrated to the lower; but after it, a desire for the Scriptures was everywhere felt."[2] This involves an admission that the "religion of the heart" propounded by Schleiermacher in his addresses *On Religion* "to the educated among its despisers"[3] (1799) was not really a Christian revival at all. Schleiermacher himself in 1803 declared that in Prussia there was almost no attendance on public worship, and the clergy had fallen into profound discredit.[4] A pietistic movement had, however, begun during the period of the French ascendancy;[5] and seeing that the freethinking of the previous generation had been in part associated with French opinion, it was natural that on this side anti-French feeling should promote a reversion to older and more "national" forms of feeling. Thus after the fall of Napoleon the tone of the students who had fought in the war seems to have been more religious than that of previous years.[6] Inasmuch, however, as the "enlightenment" of the scholarly class was maintained, and

[1] Pastor W. Baur, Hamburg, *Religious Life in Germany during the Wars of Independence*, Eng. tr. 1872, p. 41. H. J. Rose and Pusey, in their controversy as to the causes of German rationalism, were substantially at one on this point of fact. Rose, *Letter to the Bishop of London*, 1829, pp. 19, 150, 161. [2] *Id.* p. 481.

[3] *Ueber die Religion: Reden an die gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern.* These are discussed hereinafter.

[4] Lichtenberger, *Hist. of Ger. Theol. in the Nineteenth Cent.* Eng. tr. 1889, pp. 122-23.

[5] See the same volume, *passim.*

[6] Karl von Raumer, *Contrib. to the Hist. of the German Universities*, Eng. tr. 1859, p. 79. The intellectual tone of W. Baur and K. von Raumer certainly protects them from any charge of "enlightenment."

applied anew to critical problems, the religious revival did not turn back the course of progress. "When the third centenary commemoration, in 1817, of the Reformation approached, the Prussian people were in a state of stolid indifference, apparently, on religious matters."[1] Alongside of the pietistic reaction of the Liberation period there went on an open ecclesiastical strife, dating from an anti-rationalist declaration by the Court preacher Reinhard at Dresden in 1811,[2] between the rationalists or "Friends of Light" and the Scripturalists of the old school; and the effect was a general disintegration of orthodoxy, despite, or it may be largely in virtue of, the governmental policy of rewarding the Pietists and discouraging their opponents in the way of official appointments.[3] The Prussian measure (1817) of forcibly uniting the Lutheran and Calvinistic Churches, with a neutral sacramental ritual in which the eucharist was treated as a historical commemoration, tended to the same consequences, though it also revived old Lutheran zeal;[4] and when the new revolutionary movement broke out in 1848, popular feeling was substantially non-religious. "In the south of Germany especially the conflict of political opinions and revolutionary tendencies produced, in the first instance, an entire prostration of religious sentiment." The bulk of society showed entire indifference to worship, the churches being everywhere deserted; and "atheism was openly avowed, and Christianity ridiculed as the invention of priestcraft."[5] One result was a desperate effort of the clergy to "effect a union among all who retained any measure of Christian belief, in order to raise up their national religion and faith from the lowest state into which it has ever fallen since the French Revolution."

But the clerical effort evoked a counter effort. Already, in 1846, official interference with freedom of utterance led to the formation of a "free religious" society by Dr. Rupp, of Königsberg, one of the "Friends of Light" in the State Church; and he was followed by Wislicenus of Halle, a Hegelian, and by Uhlich of Magdeburg.[6] As a result of the determined pressure, social and official, which ensued on the collapse of the revolution of 1848, these societies failed to develop on the scale of their beginnings; and that of Magdeburg, which at the outset had 7,000 members, has latterly only 500; though that of Berlin has nearly 4,000.[7] There is further a *Freidenker Bund*, with branches in many towns; and the two

[1] Laing, *Notes of a Traveller*, 1842, p. 181.
[2] C. H. Cotterill, *Relig. Movements of Germany in the Nineteenth Century*, 1849, pp 39–40.
[3] *Id.* pp. 27–28, 41–42.
[4] Cp. Laing, as cited, pp. 206–207, 211.
[5] Cotterill, as cited, p. 84.
[6] Cotterill, as cited, pp. 43–47.
[7] Rapport de Ida Altmann, in *Almanach de Libre Pensée*, 1906, p. 20.

organizations, with their total membership of some fifty thousand, may be held to represent the militant side of popular freethought in Germany. This, however, constitutes only a fraction of the total amount of passive rationalism. There is a large measure of enlightenment in both the working and the middle classes; and the ostensible force of orthodoxy among the official and conformist middle class is in many respects illusory. The German police laws put a rigid check on all manner of platform and press propaganda which could be indicted as hurting the feelings of religious people; so that a jest at the Holy Coat of Trèves could even in recent years send a journalist to jail, and the platform work of the militant societies is closely trammelled. Yet there are, or have been, over a dozen journals which so far as may be take the freethought side;[1] and the whole stress of Bismarckian reaction and of official orthodoxy under the present Kaiser has never availed to make the tone of popular thought pietistic. KARL MARX, the prophet of the German Socialist movement (1818–1883), laid it down as part of its mission "to free consciousness from the religious spectre"; and his two most influential followers in Germany, BEBEL and LIEBKNECHT, were avowed atheists, the former even going so far as to avow officially in the Reichstag that "the aim of our party is on the political plane the republican form of State; on the economic, Socialism; and on the plane which we term the religious, atheism";[2] though the party attempts no propaganda of the latter order. "Christianity and Social-Democracy," said Bebel again, "are opposed as fire and water."[3]

Some index to the amount of popular freethought that normally exists under the surface in Germany is furnished, further, by the strength of the German freethought movement in the United States, where, despite the tendency to the adoption of the common speech, there grew up in the last quarter of the nineteenth century many German freethinking societies, a German federation of atheists, and a vigorous popular organ, *Der Freidenker*.

Thus, under the sounder moral and economic conditions of the life of the proletariate in Germany, straightforward rationalism, as apart from propaganda, is becoming among them more and more the rule. The bureaucratic control of education forces religious

[1] The principal have been: *Das freie Wort* and *Frankfurter Zeitung*, Frankfort-on-Main; *Der Freidenker*, Friedrichshagen, near Berlin; *Der freireligiöses Sonntagsblatt*, Breslau; *Die freie Gemeinde*, Magdeburg; *Der Atheist*, Nuremberg; *Menschentum*, Gotha; *Vossische Zeitung*, Berlin; *Berliner Volkszeitung*, Berlin; *Vorwärts* (Socialist), Berlin; *Weser Zeitung*, Bremen; *Hartungsche Zeitung*, Königsberg; *Kölnische Zeitung*, Cologne.

[2] Studemund, *Der moderne Unglaube in den unteren Ständen*, 1901, p. 14.

[3] *Id.* p. 22.

teaching in the common schools; and there is no "conscience clause" for unbelieving parents.[1] A Protestant pastor at the end of the century made an investigation into the state of religious opinion among the working Socialists of some provincial towns and rural districts, and found everywhere a determined attitude of rationalism. The formula of the Social Democrats, "Religion is a private matter," he bitterly perceives to carry the implication "a private matter for the fools"; and while he holds that the belief in a speedy collapse of the Christian religion is latterly less common than formerly among the upper and middle classes, he complains that the Socialists are not similarly enlightened.[2] Bebel's drastic teaching as to the economic and social conditions of the rise of Christianity,[3] and the materialistic theory of history set forth by Marx and Engels, he finds generally accepted. Not only do most of the party leaders declare themselves to be without religion, but those who do not so declare themselves are so no less.[4] Nor is the unbelief a mere sequel to the Socialism: often the development is the other way.[5] The opinion is almost universal, further, that the clergy in general do not believe what they teach.[6] Atheists are numerous among the peasantry; more numerous among the workers in the provincial towns; and still more numerous in the large towns;[7] and while many take a sympathetic view of Jesus as a man and teacher, not a few deny his historic existence[8]—a view set forth in non-Socialist circles also.[9]

12. Under the widely-different political conditions in Russia and the Scandinavian States it is the more significant that in all alike rationalism is latterly common among the educated classes. In Norway the latter perhaps include a larger proportion of working people than can be so classed even in Germany; and rationalism is relatively hopeful, though social freedom is still far from perfect. It is the old story of toleration for a dangerously well-placed freethought, and intolerance for that which reaches the common people. In Russia rationalism has before it the task of transmuting a system of autocracy into one of self-government. In no European country, perhaps, is rationalism more general among the educated classes;

[1] A. D. McLaren, *An Australian in Germany*, 1911, pp. 181, 184.
[2] Studemund, *Der moderne Unglaube in den unteren Ständen*, 1901, pp. 17, 21.
[3] *Glossen zu Yves Guyot's und Sigismund Lacroix's "Die wahre Gestalt des Christentums."*
[4] Studemund, p. 22.
[5] *Id.* p. 23.
[6] *Id.* p. 27.
[7] *Id.* pp. 37–38.
[8] *Id.* pp. 40–42. Cp. p. 43. Pastor Studemund cites other inquirers, notably Rade, Gebhardt, Lorenz, and Dietzgen, all to the same effect.
[9] *E.g.* Pastor A. Kalthoff's *Was wissen wir von Jesus?* 1904. Since that date the opinion has found new and powerful supporters in Germany.

and in none is there a greater mass of popular ignorance.[1] The popular icon-worship in Moscow can hardly be paralleled outside of Asia. On the other hand, the aristocracy became Voltairean in the eighteenth century, and has remained more or less incredulous since, though it now joins hands with the Church; while the democratic movement, in its various phases of socialism, constitutionalism, and Nihilism, has been markedly anti-religious since the second quarter of the century.[2] Subsidiary revivals of mysticism, such as are chronicled in other countries, are of course to be seen in Russia; but the instructed class, the *intelliguentia*, is essentially naturalistic in its cast of thought. This state of things subsists despite the readiness of the government to suppress the slightest sign of official heterodoxy in the universities.[3] The struggle is thus substantially between the spirit of freedom and that of arbitrary rule; and the fortunes of freethought go with the former.

13. "Free-religious" societies, such as have been noted in Germany, may be rated as forms of moderate freethought propaganda, and are to be found in all Protestant countries, with all shades of development. A movement of the kind has existed for a number of years back in America, in the New England States and elsewhere, and may be held to represent a theistic or agnostic thought too advanced to adhere even to the Unitarianism which during the two middle quarters of the century was perhaps the predominant creed in New England. The Theistic Church conducted by the Rev. Charles Voysey after his expulsion from the Church of England in 1871 to his death in 1912, and since then by the Rev. Dr. Walter Walsh, is an example. Another type of such a gradual and peaceful evolution is the South Place Institute (formerly "Chapel") of London, where, under the famous orator W. J. Fox, nominally a Unitarian, there was preached between 1824 and 1852 a theism tending to pantheism, perhaps traceable to elements in the doctrine of Priestley, and passed on by Mr. Fox to Robert Browning.[4] In 1864 the charge passed to MONCURE D. CONWAY, under whom the congregation quietly advanced during twenty years from Unitarianism to a non-scriptural rationalism, embracing the shades of philosophic theism, agnosticism, and anti-theism. In Conway's *Lessons for the*

[1] "The people in the country do not read; in the towns they read little. The journals are little circulated. In Russia one never sees a cabman, an artisan, a labourer reading a newspaper" (Ivan Strannik, *La pensée russe contemporaine*, 1903, p. 5).

[2] Cp. E. Lavigne, *Introduction à l'histoire du nihilisme russe*, 1880, pp. 149, 161, 224; Arnaudo, *Le Nihilisme*, French trans. pp. 37, 58, 61, 63, 77, 86, etc.; Tikhomirov, *La Russie*, p. 290.

[3] Tikhomirov, *La Russie*, pp. 325–26, 338–39.

[4] Cp. Priestley, *Essay on the First Principles of Government*, 2nd ed. 1771, pp. 257–61, and Conway's *Centenary History of South Place*, pp. 63, 77, 80.

Day will be found a series of peculiarly vivid mementos of that period, a kind of itinerary, more intimate than any retrospective record. The latter part of his life, partly preserved in one of the most interesting autobiographies of the century, was spent between England and the United States and in travel. After his first withdrawal to the States in 1884 the Institute became an open platform for rationalist and non-theological ethics and social and historical teaching, and it now stands as an "Ethical Society" in touch with the numerous groups so named which have come into existence in England in the last dozen years on lines originally laid down by Dr. Felix Adler in New York. At the time of the present writing the English societies of this kind number between twenty and thirty, the majority being in London and its environs. Their open adherents, who are some thousands strong, are in most cases non-theistic rationalists, and include many former members of the Secularist movement, of which the organization has latterly dwindled. On partly similar lines there were developed in provincial towns about the end of the century a small number of "Labour Churches," in which the tendency was to substitute a rationalist humanitarian ethic for supernaturalism; and the same lecturers frequently spoke from their platforms and from those of Ethical and Secularist societies. Of late, however, the Labour Churches have tended to disappear. All this means no resumption of church-going, but, by the confession of the Churches, a completer secularization of the Sunday.

14. Alongside of the lines of movement before sketched, there has subsisted in England during the greater part of the nineteenth century a considerable organization of Unitarianism. In the early years of the nineteenth century it was strong enough to obtain the repeal (1813) of the penal laws against anti-Trinitarianism, whereafter the use of the name "Unitarian" became more common, and a sect so called was founded formally in 1825. When the heretical preachers of the Presbyterian sect began openly to declare themselves as Unitarians, there naturally arose a protest from the orthodox, and an attempt was made in 1833 to save from its new destination the property owned by the heretical congregations.[1] This was frustrated by the Dissenters' Chapels Act of 1844, which gave to each group singly the power to interpret its trust in its own fashion. Thenceforward the sect prospered considerably, albeit not so greatly as in

[1] See Rev. Joseph Hunter, *An Historical Defence of the Trustees of Lady Hewley's Foundations*, 1834; *The History, Opinions, and Present Legal Position of the English Presbyterians* (official), 1834; *An Examination and Defence of the Principles of Protestant Dissent*, by the Rev. W. Hamilton Drummond, of Dublin, 1842.

the United States. During the century English Unitarianism has been associated with scholarship through such names as John Kenrick and Samuel Sharpe, the historians of Egypt, and J. J. Tayler; and, less directly, with philosophy in the person of Dr. James Martineau, who, however, was rather a coadjutor than a champion of the sect. In the United States the movement, greatly aided to popularity by the eloquent humanism of the two Channings, lost the prestige of the name of Emerson, who had been one of its ministers, by the inability of his congregation to go the whole way with him in his opinions. In 1853 Emerson told the young Moncure Conway that "the Unitarian Churches were stated to be no longer producing ministers equal to their forerunners, but were more and more finding their best men in those coming from orthodox Churches," who "would, of course, have some enthusiasm for their new faith."[1] Latterly Unitarians have been entitled to say that the Trinitarian Churches are approximating to their position.[2] Such an approach, however, involves rather a weakening than a strengthening of the smaller body; though some of its teachers are to the full as bigoted and embittered in their propaganda as the bulk of the traditionally orthodox. Others adhere to their ritual practices in the spirit of use and wont, as Emerson found when he sought to rationalize in his own Church the usage of the eucharist.[3] On the other hand, numbers have passed from Unitarianism to thoroughgoing rationalism; and some whole congregations, following more or less the example of that of South Place Chapel, have latterly reached a position scarcely distinguishable from that of the Ethical Societies.

15. A partly similar evolution has taken place among the Protestant Churches of France, Switzerland, Hungary, and Holland. French Protestantism could not but be intellectually moved by the intense ferment of the Revolution; and, when finally secured against active oppression from the Catholic side, could not but develop an intellectual opposition to the Catholic Reaction after 1815. In Switzerland, always in intellectual touch with France and Germany, the tendencies which had been stamped as Socinian in the days of Voltaire soon reasserted themselves so strongly as to provoke fanatical reaction.[4] The nomination of Strauss to a chair of theology at Zürich by a Radical Government in 1839 actually gave rise to a violent revolt, inflamed and led by Protestant clergymen. The

[1] Conway, *Autobiography*, 1905, i, 123.
[2] So Prof. William James, *The Will to Believe*, etc., 1897, p. 133.
[3] Conway, *Emerson at Home and Abroad*, 1883, ch. vii.
[4] Hagenbach, *Kirchengeschichte des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts*, 1848, ii, 422. Rationalism seems to have spread soonest in the canton of Zürich. *Id.* ii, 427.

Executive Council were expelled, and a number of persons killed in the strife.[1] In the canton of Aargau in 1841, again, the cry of "religion in danger" sufficed to bring about a Catholic insurrection against a Liberal Council; and yet again in 1844 it led, among the Catholics of the Valais canton, to the bloodiest insurrection of all. Since these disgraceful outbreaks the progress of Rationalism in Switzerland has been steady. In 1847 a chair was given at Berne to the rationalistic scholar Zeller, without any such resistance as was made to Strauss at Zürich. In 1892, out of a total number of 3,151 students in the five universities of Switzerland and in the academies of Fribourg and Neuchâtel, the number of theological students was only 374, positively less than that of the teaching staff, which was 431. Leaving out the academies named, which had no medical faculty, the number of theological students stood at 275 out of 2,917. The Church in Switzerland has thus undergone the relative restriction in power and prestige seen in the other European countries of long-established culture. The evolution, however, remains negative rather than positive. Though a number of pastors latterly call themselves *libres penseurs* or *penseurs libres*, and a movement of ethical culture (*morale sociale*) has made progress, the forces of positive freethought are not numerically strong. An economic basis still supports the Churches, and the lack of it leaves rationalism non-aggressive.[2]

A somewhat similar state of things exists in Holland, where the "higher criticism" of both the Old and New Testaments made notable progress in the middle decades of the century. There then resulted not only an extensive decay of orthodoxy within the Protestant Church, but a movement of aggressive popular freethought, which was for a number of years well represented in journalism. To-day, orthodoxy and freethought are alike less demonstrative; the broad explanation being that the Dutch people in the mass has ceased to be pietistic, and has secularized its life. Even in the Bible-loving Boer Republic of South Africa (Transvaal), in its time one of the most orthodox of the civilized communities of the world, there was seen in the past generation the phenomenon of an agnostic ex-clergyman's election to the post of president, in the person of T. F. Burgers, who succeeded Pretorius in 1871. His election was of course on political and not on religious grounds; and panic fear on the score of his heresy, besides driving some fanatics

[1] Grote, *Seven Letters concerning the Politics of Switzerland*, pp. 34–35. Hagenbach (*Kirchengeschichte*, ii, 427–28) shows no shame over the insurrection at Zürich. But cp. Beard, in *Voices of the Church in Reply to Dr. Strauss*, 1845, pp. 17–18.

[2] Cp. the *rapport* of Ch. Fulpius in the *Almanach de Libre Pensée*, 1906.

to emigrate, is said to have disorganized a Boer expedition under his command;[1] but his views were known when he was elected. In the years 1899–1902 the terrible experience of the last Boer War, in South Africa as in Britain, perhaps did more to turn critical minds against supernaturalism than was accomplished by almost any other agency in the same period. In Britain the overturn was by way of the revolt of many ethically-minded Christians against the attitude of the orthodox churches, which were so generally and so unscrupulously belligerent as to astonish many even of their freethinking opponents.[2] As regards the Boers and the Cape Dutch the resultant unbelief was among the younger men, who harassed their elders with challenges as to the justice or the activity of a God who permitted the liberties of his most devoted worshippers to be wantonly destroyed. Among the more educated burghers in the Orange Free State commandos unbelief asserted itself with increasing force and frequency.[3] An ethical rationalism thus motived is not likely to be displaced; and the Christian churches of Britain have thus the sobering knowledge that the war which they so vociferously glorified[4] has wrought to the discredit of their creed alike in their own country and among the vanquished.

16. The history of popular freethought in Sweden yields a good illustration, in a compact form,[5] of the normal play of forces and counter-forces. Since the day of Christina, as we saw, though there have been many evidences of passive unbelief, active rationalism has been little known in her kingdom down till modern times, Sweden as a whole having been little touched by the great ferment of the eighteenth century. The French Revolution, however, stirred the waters there as elsewhere. Tegnér, the poet-bishop, author of the once-famous *Frithiof's Saga*, was notable in his day for a determined rejection of the evangelical doctrine of salvation; and his letters contain much criticism of the ruling system. But the first recognizable champion of freethought in Sweden is the thinker and historian E. G. Geijer (d. 1847), whose history of his native land is one of the best European performances of his generation.

[1] G. M. Theal, *South Africa* ("Story of the Nations" series), pp. 340, 345. Mr. Theal's view of the mental processes of the Boers is somewhat à priori, and his explanation seems in part inconsistent with his own narrative.

[2] An English acquaintance of my own at Cape Town, who before the war not only was an orthodox believer, but found his chief weekly pleasure in attending church, was so astounded by the general attitude of the clergy on the war that he severed his connection, once for all. Thousands did the same in England.

[3] I write on the strength of personal testimonies spontaneously given to me in South Africa, some of them by clergymen of the Dutch Reformed Church.

[4] See the evidence collected in the pamphlet *The Churches and the War*, by Alfred Marks. *New Age* Office, 1905.

[5] For the survey here reduced to outline I am indebted to two Swedish friends.

In 1820 he was prosecuted for his attack upon the dogmas of the Trinity and redemption—long the special themes of discussion in Sweden—in his book *Thorild;* but was acquitted by the jury. Thenceforth Sweden follows the general development of Europe. In 1841 Strauss's *Leben Jesu* was translated in Swedish, and wrought its usual effect. On the popular side the poet Wilhelm von Braun carried on an anti-Biblical warfare; and a blacksmith in a provincial town contrived to print in 1850 a translation of Paine's *Age of Reason.* Once more the spirit of persecution blazed forth, and he was prosecuted and imprisoned. H. B. Palmaer (d. 1854) was likewise prosecuted for his satire, *The Last Judgment in Cocaigne* (Kräkwinkel), with the result that his defence extended his influence. In the same period the Stockholm curate Nils Ignell (d. 1864) produced a whole series of critical pamphlets and a naturalistic *History of the Development of Man,* besides supplying a preface to the Swedish translation of Renan's *Vie de Jésus.* Meantime translations of the works of Theodore Parker, by V. Pfeiff and A. F. Akerberg, had a large circulation and a wide influence; and the courage of the gymnasium rector N. J. Cramer (d. 1893), author of *The Farewell to the Church,* gave an edge to the movement. The partly rationalistic doctrine of Victor Rydberg (d. 1895) was in comparison uncritical, and was proportionally popular.

On another line the books of Dr. Nils Lilja (d. 1870), written for working people, created a current of rationalism among the masses; and in the next generation G. J. Leufstedt maintained it by popular lectures and by the issue of translations of Colenso, Ingersoll, Büchner, and Renan. Hjalmar Stromer (d. 1886) did similar platform work. Meantime the followers of Parker and Rydberg founded in 1877 a monthly review, *The Truthseeker,* which lasted till 1894, and an association of "Believers in Reason," closely resembling the British Ethical Societies of our own day. Among its leading adherents has been K. P. Arnoldson, the well-known peace advocate. Liberal clerics were now fairly numerous; Positivism, represented by Dr. Anton Nyström's *General History of Civilization,* played its part; and the more radical freethinking movement, nourished by new translations, became specially active, with the usual effect on orthodox feeling. AUGUST STRINDBERG, author and lecturer, was prosecuted in 1884 on a charge of ridiculing the eucharist, but was declared not guilty. The strenuous VICTOR LENNSTRAND, lecturer and journalist, prosecuted in 1888 and later for his anti-Christian propaganda, was twice fined and imprisoned, with the result of extending his influence and discrediting his opponents.

"Utilitarian Associations," created by his activity, were set up in many parts of the country; and his movement survives his death.

17. Only in the United States has the public lecture platform been made a means of propaganda to anything like the extent seen in Britain; and the greatest part of the work in the States has thus far been done by the late Colonel INGERSOLL, the leading American orator of the last generation, and the most widely influential platform propagandist of the last century. No other single freethinker, it is believed, has reached such an audience by public speech; and between his propaganda and that of the freethought journals there has been maintained for a generation back a large body of vigorous freethinking opinion in all parts of the States. Before the Civil War this could hardly be said. In the middle decades of the century the conditions had been so little changed that after the death of President LINCOLN, who was certainly a non-Christian deist, and an agnostic deist at that,[1] it was sought to be established that he was latterly orthodox. In his presidential campaign of 1860 he escaped attack on his opinions simply because his opponent, Stephen A. Douglas, was likewise an unbeliever.[2] The great negro orator, FREDERICK DOUGLAS, was as heterodox as Lincoln.[3] It is even alleged that President Grant[4] was of the same cast of opinion. Such is the general drift of intelligent thought in the United States, from Washington onwards; and still the social conditions impose on public men the burden of concealment, while popular history is garbled for the same reasons. Despite the great propagandist power of the late Colonel Ingersoll, therefore, American freethought remains dependent largely on struggling organizations and journals,[5] and its special literature is rather of the popularizing than of the scholarly order. Nowhere else has every new advance of rationalistic science been more angrily opposed by the priesthood; because nowhere is the ordinary prejudice of the priest more voluble or better-bottomed in self-complacency. As late as 1891 the Methodist Bishop Keener delivered a ridiculous attack on the evolution theory before the Œcumenical Council of Methodism at Washington, declaring that it had been utterly refuted by a certain "wonderful deposit of the Ashley beds."[6] Various professors in ecclesiastical colleges have been driven from their posts for accepting in turn the discoveries of geology, biology, and the "higher criticism"—for

[1] Cp. Lamon's *Life of Lincoln*, and J. B. Remsburg's *Abraham Lincoln: Was he a Christian?* (New York, 1893.)
[2] Remsburg, pp. 318–19. [3] Personal information. [4] Remsburg, p. 324.
[5] Of these the New York *Truthseeker* has been the most energetic and successful.
[6] White, *Warfare*, i, 81.

instance, Woodrow of Columbia, South Carolina; Toy of Louisville; Winchell of Vanderbilt University; and more than one professor in the American college at Beyrout.[1] In every one of the three former cases, it is true, the denounced professor has been called to a better chair; and latterly some of the more liberal clergy have even commercially exploited the higher criticism by producing the "Rainbow Bible." Generally speaking, however, in the United States sheer preoccupation with business, and lack of leisure, counteract in a measure the relative advantage of social freedom; and while culture is more widely diffused than in England, it remains on the whole less radical in the "educated" classes so-called. So far as it is possible to make a quantitative estimate, it may be said that in the more densely populated parts of the States there is latterly less of studious freethinking because there is less leisure than in England; but that in the Western States there is a relative superiority, class for class, because of the special freedom of the conditions and the independent character of many of the immigrants who constitute the new populations.[2]

Section 2.—Biblical Criticism

It is within the last generation that the critical analysis of the Jewish and Christian sacred books has been most generally carried on; but the process has never been suspended since the German *Aufklärung* arose on the stimuli of English and French deism.

1. At the beginning of the century, educated men in general believed in the Semitic myths of creation, as given in Genesis: long before the end of it they had more or less explicitly rectified their beliefs in the light of new natural science and new archæology. The change became rapid after 1860; but it had been led up to even in the period of reaction. While in France, under the restored monarchy, rationalistic activity was mainly headed into historical, philosophical, and sociological study, and in England orthodoxy predominated in theological discussion, the German rationalistic movement went on among the specialists, despite the liberal religious reaction of Schleiermacher,[3] who himself gave forth such

[1] White, *Warfare*, i, 84, 86, 314, 317, 318.

[2] This view is not inconsistent with the fact that popular forms of credulity are also found specially flourishing in the West. Cp. Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*, 3rd ed. ii, 832–33.

[3] As to the absolute predominance of rationalistic unbelief (in the orthodox sense of the word) in educated Germany in the first third of the century, see the *Memoirs of F. Perthes*, Eng. tr. 2nd ed. ii, 240–45, 255, 266–75. Despite the various reactions claimed by Perthes and others, it is clear that the tables have never since been turned. Cp. Pearson, *Infidelity*, pp. 554–59, 569–74. Schleiermacher was charged on his own side with making fatal concessions. Kahnis, *Internal Hist. of German Protestantism*, Eng. tr. 1856 pp. 210–11; Robins, *A Defence of the Faith*, 1862, i, 181; and Quinet as there cited.

an uncertain sound. His case and that of his father, an army chaplain, tell signally of the power of the mere clerical occupation to develop a species of emotional belief in one who has even attained rationalism. When the son, trained for the church, avowed to his father (1787) that he had lost faith in the supernatural Jesus, the father professed to mourn bitterly, but three years later avowed that he in his own youth had preached Christianity for twelve years while similarly disbelieving its fundamental tenet.[1] He professionally counselled compromise, which the son duly practised, with such success that, whereas he originally addressed his *Discourses on Religion* (1799) to "the educated among its despisers," he was able to say in the preface to the third edition, twenty years later (1821), that the need now was to reason with the pietists and literalists, the ignorant and bigoted, the credulous and superstitious.[2] In short, he and others had been able to set up a fashion of poetic religion among deists, but not to lighten the darkness of orthodox belief.

The ostensible religious revival associated with Schleiermacher's name was in fact a reaction of temperament, akin to the romantic movement in literature, of which Chateaubriand in France was the exponent as regarded religious feeling. The German "rationalism" of the latter part of the eighteenth century, with its stolid translation of the miraculous into the historical, and its official accommodation of the result to the purposes of the pulpit, had not reached any firm scientific foundation; and Schleiermacher on the other side, protesting that religion was a matter not of knowledge but of feeling, attracted alike the religious emotionalists, the seekers of compromise, and the romantics. His personal and literary charm, and his tolerance of mundane morals, gave him a German vogue not unlike that of Chateaubriand in France. His intellectual cast and ultimate philosophic bias, however, together with his freedom of private life,[3] ultimately alienated him from the orthodox, and thus it was that he died (1834) in the odour of heresy. Heresy, in fact, he had preached from the outset; and it was only in a highly emancipated society that his teaching could have been fashionable. The statement that by his *Discourses* "with one stroke he overthrew the card-castle of rationalism and the old fortress of orthodoxy"[4] is literally quite

[1] *Aus Schleiermachers Leben: In Briefen*, 1860, i, 42, 84. The father's letters, with their unctuous rhetoric, are a revelation of the power of declamatory habit to eliminate sincere thought.

[2] *Werke*, 1843, i, 140.

[3] See Kahnis, p. 214, and refs. as to his relations with Frau Grunow. "He belonged to the circle of Prince Louis, in which intellect and art, but not morality," reigned. *Ib.* Compare the sympathetic Lichtenberger, *Hist. of Ger. Theol. in the Nineteenth Cent.* Eng. tr. 1889, pp. 103–104. It was of course his clerical character that disadvantaged Schleiermacher in such matters.

[4] Lichtenberger, as cited, p. 87.

false, for the old compromising pseudo-rationalism survived a long while, and orthodoxy still longer; and it is quite misleading inasmuch as it suggests a resurgence of faith. The same historian proceeds to record that some saw in the work "only a slightly disguised return to superstition, and others a brilliant confession of unbelief." "The general public saw in the Discourses a new assault of romanticism upon religion. The clergy in particular were painfully aroused, and did not dissemble their irritation. Spalding himself could not restrain his anger." Schleiermacher's friend Sach, who had passed the Discourses in manuscript, woke up to denounce them as unchristian, pantheistic, and denuded of the ideas of God, immortality, and morality.[1]

In England the work would have been so denounced on all sides; and the bulk of Schleiermacher's teaching would there have been reckoned revolutionary and "godless." He was a lover of both political and social freedom; and in his *Two Memoranda on the Church Question in regard to Prussia* (1803) he made "a veritable declaration of war on the clerical spirit."[2] Recognizing that ecclesiastical discipline had reached a low ebb, he even proposed that civil marriage should precede religious marriage, and be alone obligatory; besides planning a drastic subjection of the Prussian Church to State regulation.[3] In his pamphlet on *The So-called Epistle to Timothy*, of which he denied the authenticity, he played the part of a "destructive" critic.[4] He "saw with pain the approach of the rising tide of confessionalism"—that is, the movement for an exact statement of creed.[5] Nor can it be said that, despite his attempts in later life to reach a more definite theology, Schleiermacher really held firmly any Christian or even theistic dogma. He seems to have been at bottom a pantheist;[6] and the secret of his attraction for so many German preachers and theologians then and since is that he offered them in eloquent and moving diction a kind of profession of faith which avoided alike the fatal undertaking of the old religious rationalism to reduce the sacred narratives to terms of reason, and the dogged refusal of orthodoxy to admit that there was anything to explain away. Philosophically and critically speaking, his teaching has no lasting intellectual substance, being first a negation of intellectual tests and then a belated attempt to apply them. It is not even original, being a development from Rousseau and Lessing. But it had undoubtedly a freeing and civilizing influence for many years;

[1] Lichtenberger, as cited, p. 89.
[2] *Id.* p. 109.
[3] *Id.* pp. 123–24.
[4] *Id.* p. 119.
[5] *Id.* p. 129.
[6] Strauss, *Die Halben und die Ganzen*, 1865, p. 18.

and it did little harm save insofar as it fostered the German proclivity to the nebulous in thought and language, and partly encouraged the normal resistance to the critical spirit. All irrationalism, to be sure, in some sort spells self-will and lawlessness; but the orthodox negation of reason was far more primitive than Schleiermacher's. From that side, accordingly, he never had any sympathy. When, soon after his funeral, in which his coffin was borne and followed by troops of students, his church was closed to the friends who wished there to commemorate him, it was fairly clear that his own popularity lay mainly with the progressive spirits, and not among the orthodox; and in the end his influence tended to merge in that of the critical movement.[1]

2. Gradually that had developed a greater precision of method, though there were to be witnessed repetitions of the intellectual anomalies of the past, so-called rationalists losing the way while supernaturalists occasionally found it. It has been remarked by Reuss that Paulus, a clerical "rationalist," fought for the Pauline authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews in the very year in which Tholuck, a reconverted evangelical, gave up the Pauline authorship as hopeless; that when Schleiermacher, ostensibly a believer in inspiration, denied the authenticity of the Epistle to Timothy, the [theological] rationalist Wegscheider opposed him; and that the rationalistic Eichhorn maintained the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch long after the supernaturalist Vater had disproved it.[2] Still the general movement was inevitably and irrevocably rationalistic. Beginning with the Old Testament, criticism gradually saw more and more of mere myth where of old men had seen miracle, and where the first rationalists saw natural events misconceived. Soon the process reached the New Testament, every successive step being resisted in the old fashion; and much laborious work, now mostly forgotten, was done by a whole company of scholars, among whom Paulus, Eichhorn, De Wette, G. L. Bauer, Wegscheider, Bretschneider, and Gabler were prominent.[3] The train as it were exploded on the world in the great *Life of Jesus* by STRAUSS (1835), a year after the death of Schleiermacher.

This was in some respects the high-water mark of rational critical science for the century, inasmuch as it represented the

[1] For estimates of his work cp. Baur, *Kirchengeschichte des 19ten Jahrh.* p. 45; Kahnis, as last cited; Pfleiderer, *Development of Theology in Germany*. 1893, bk. i, ch. iii; bk. ii, ch. ii; Lichtenberger, as cited; and art. by Rev. F. J. Smith in *Theol. Review*, July, 1869.

[2] Reuss, *History of the Canon*, Eng. tr. 1890, p. 387. Cp. Strauss, *Einleitung in Das Leben Jesu*, § 10.

[3] See a good account of the development in Strauss's Introductions to his two *Lives of Jesus*,

fullest use of free judgment. The powerful and orderly mind of Strauss, working systematically on a large body of previous unsystematic criticism, produced something more massive and coherent than any previous writer had achieved. It was not that he applied any new principle. Criticism had long been slowly disengaging itself from the primary fallacy of taking all scriptural records as standing for facts, and explaining away the supernatural side. Step by step it was recognized that not misinterpretation of events but *mythology* underlay much of the sacred history. Already in 1799 an anonymous and almost unnoticed writer[1] had argued that the entire gospel story was a pre-existent conception in the Jewish mind. In 1802 G. L. Bauer had produced a treatise on *Hebrew Mythology*,[2] in which not only was the actuality of myth in Bible narrative insisted on, but the general principle of animism in savage thought was clearly formulated. Semler had seen that the stories of Samson and Esther were myths. Even Eichhorn—who reduced all the Old Testament stories to natural events misunderstood, accepted Noah and the patriarchs as historical personages, and followed Bahrdt in making Moses light a fire on Mount Sinai—changed his method on coming to the New Testament, and pointed out that only indemonstrable hypotheses could be reached by turning supernatural events into natural where there was no outside historical evidence. Other writers—as Krug, Gabler, Kaiser, Wegscheider, and Horst—ably pressed the mythical principle, some of them preceding Bauer. The so-called "natural" theory—which was not at all that of the "natural*ists*" but the specialty of the compromising "rationalists" —was thus effectively shaken by a whole series of critics.

But the power of intellectual habit and environment was still strikingly illustrated in the inability of all of the critics to shake off completely the old fallacy. Bauer explained the divine promise to Abraham as standing for the patriarch's own prophetic anticipation, set up by a contemplation of the starry heavens. Another gave up the supernatural promise of the birth of the Baptist, but held to the dumbness of Zechariah. Krug similarly accepted the item of the childless marriage, and claimed to be applying the mythical principle in taking the Magi without the star, and calling them oriental merchants. Kaiser took the story of the fish with a coin in its mouth as fact, while complaining of other less absurd reductions of miracle to natural occurrences. The method of Paulus,[3] the "Chris-

[1] In a volume entitled *Offenbarung und Mythologie.*
[2] *Hebräische Mythologie des alten und neuen Testaments.*
[3] *Evangeliencommentar*, 1800–1804; *Leben Jesu*, 1828.

tian Evêmeros"—who loyally rejected all miracles, but got rid of them on the plan of explaining, *e.g.*, that when Jesus was supposed to be walking on the water he was really walking on the bank—was still popular, a generation after Schleiermacher's *Reden*. The mythical theory as a whole went on hesitating among definitions and genera—saga and legend, historical myth, mythical history, philosophical myth, poetic myth—and the differences of the mythological school over method arrested the acceptance of their fundamental principle.

3. No less remarkable was the check to the few attempts which had been made at clearing the ground by removing the Fourth Gospel from the historical field. Lessing had taken this gospel as peculiarly historical, as did Fichte and Schleiermacher and the main body of critics after him. Only in England (by Evanson) had the case been more radically handled. In 1820 Bretschneider, following up a few tentative German utterances, put forth, by way of hypothesis, a general argument[1] to the effect that the whole presentment of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel is irreconcilable with that of the Synoptics, that it could not be taken as historical, and that it could not therefore be the work of the Apostle John.[2] The result was a general discussion and a general rejection. The innovation in theory was too sudden for assimilation: and Bretschneider, finding no support, later declared that he had been "relieved of his doubts" by the discussion, and had thus attained his object. Strauss himself, in his first *Leben Jesu*, failed to realize the case; and it was not till the second (1863) that he developed it, profiting by the intermediate work of F. C. Baur.

4. But as regards the gospel history in general, the first *Leben Jesu* is a great "advance in force" as compared with all preceding work. Himself holding undoubtingly to the vital assumption of the rationalizing school that the central story of Jesus and the disciples and the crucifixion was history, he yet applied the mythical principle systematically to nearly all the episodes, handling the case with the calmness of a great judge and the skill of a great critic. Even Strauss, indeed, paid the penalty which seems so generally to attach to the academic discipline—the lack of ultimate hold on life. After showing that much of the gospel narrative was mere myth, and leaving utterly problematical all the rest, he saw fit to begin and end with the announcement that nothing really mattered—that the *ideal*

[1] *Probabilia de Evangelii et Epistolarum Joannis Apostoli indole et origine.*

[2] It is thus inaccurate—Strauss himself being the witness—to say, as does Dr. Conybeare (*Hist. of N. T. Crit.* p. 107), that Strauss was the first German writer to discern the unhistoricity of the Fourth Gospel.

Jesus was unaffected by historic analysis, and that it was the ideal that counted.[1] In a world in which nine honest believers out of ten held that the facts mattered everything, there could be no speedy or practical triumph for a demonstration which thus announced its own inutility. Strauss had achieved for New Testament criticism what Kant and Fichte and Hegel had compassed for rational philosophy in general, ostensibly proffering together bane and antidote. As in their case, however, so in his, the truly critical work had an effect in despite of the theoretic surrender. Among instructed men, historical belief in the gospels has never been the same since Strauss wrote; and he lived to figure for his countrymen as one of the most thoroughgoing freethinkers of his age.

5. For a time there was undoubtedly "reaction," engineered with the full power of the Prussian State in particular. The pious Frederick William IV, already furious against Swiss Radicalism in 1847, was moved by the revolutionary outbreaks of 1848 to a fierce repression of everything liberal in theological teaching. "This dismal period of Prussian history was the bloom-period of the Hengsterbergan theology"[2]—the school of rabid orthodoxy. In 1854, Eduard Zeller, bringing out in book form his work on the *Acts of the Apostles* (originally produced in the *Tübingen Theological Journal*, 1848–51), writes that "The exertions of our ecclesiastics, assisted by political reaction, have been so effectual that the majority of our theologians not only look with suspicion or indifference on this or that scientific opinion, but regard scientific knowledge in general with the same feelings"; and he leaves it an open question "whether time will bring a change, or whether German Protestantism will stagnate in the Byzantine conditions towards which it is now hastening with all sail on."[3] For his own part, Zeller abandoned the field of theology for that of philosophy, producing a history of Greek philosophy, and one of German philosophy since Leibnitz.

6. Another expert of Baur's school, Albrecht Schwegler, author of works on Montanism, the Post-Apostolic Age, and other problems of early Christian history, and of a *Handbook of the History of Philosophy* which for half a century had an immense circulation, was similarly driven out of theological research by the virulence of the reaction,[4] and turned to the task of Roman history, in which he distinguished himself as he did in every other he essayed. The

[1] *Das Leben Jesu*, pref. to first ed. *end.*
[2] Hausrath, *David Friedrich Strauss und die Theologie seiner Zeit*, 1878, ii, 233–34.
[3] Pref. to work cited, Eng. tr. 1875, i, 86, 89.
[4] Lichtenberger, as cited, p. 391.

brains were being expelled from the chairs of theology. But this very fact tended to discredit the reaction itself; and outside of the Prussian sphere of influence German criticism went actively on. Gustav Volkmar, turning his back on Germany in 1854, settled in Switzerland, and in 1863 became professor at Zürich, where he added to his early *Religion Jesu* (1857) and other powerful works his treatises on the *Origin of the Gospels* (1866), *The Gospels* (1869), *Commentary on the Apocalypse* (1860–65), and *Jesus Nazarenus* (1881)—all stringent critical performances, irreconcilable with orthodoxy. Elsewhere too there was a general resumption of progress.

To this a certain contribution was made by BRUNO BAUER (1809–1882), who, after setting out as an orthodox Hegelian, outwent Strauss in the opposite direction. In 1838, as a licentiate at Bonn, he produced two volumes on *The Religion of the Old Testament*, in which the only critical element is the notion of a "historical evolution of revelation." Soon he had got beyond belief in revelation. In 1840 appeared his *Critique of the Gospel History of John*, and in 1841 his much more disturbing *Critique of the Gospel History of the Synoptics*, wherein there is substituted for Strauss's formula of the "community-mind" working on tradition, that of individual literary construction. Weisse and Wilcke had convinced him that Mark was the first gospel, and Wilcke in particular that it was no mere copy of an oral tradition but an artistic construction. As he claimed, this was a much more "positive" conception than Strauss's, which was fundamentally "mysterious."[1] Unfortunately, though he saw that the new position involved the non-historicity of the Gospel Jesus, he left his own historic conception "mysterious," giving no reason why the "Urevangelist" framed his romance. Bauer was non-anthropological, and left his theory as it began, one of an arbitrary construction by gospel-makers. Immediately after his book appeared that of Ghillany on *Human Sacrifice among the ancient Hebrews* (1842), which might have given him clues; but they seem to have had for him no significance.

As it was, his book on the Synoptics raised a great storm; and when the official request for the views of the university faculties as to the continuance of his licence evoked varying answers, Bauer settled the matter by a violent attack on professional theologians in general, and was duly expelled.[2] For the rest of his long life he was a freelance, doing some relatively valid work on the Pauline problem, but pouring out his turbid spirit in a variety of political

[1] *Kritik der evang. Gesch. der Synoptiker*, ed. 1846, Vorrede, pp. v–xiij.
[2] Baur, *Kirchengesch. des 19ten Jahrh.* pp. 388–89.

writings, figuring by turns as an anti-Semite (1843), a culture-historian,[1] and a pre-Bismarckian imperialist, despairing of German unity, but looking hopefully to German absorption in a vast empire of Russia.[2] Naturally he found political happiness in 1870,[3] living on, a spent force, to do fresh books on Christian origins,[4] on German culture-history, and on the glories of imperialism.

7. In 1864, after an abstention of twenty years from discussion of the problem, Strauss restated his case in a *Life of Jesus, adapted for the German People.* Here, accepting the contention of F. C. Baur that the proper line of inquiry was to settle the order of composition of the synoptic gospels, and agreeing in Baur's view that Matthew came first, he undertook to offer more of positive result than was reached in his earlier research, which simply dealt scientifically with the abundant elements of dubiety in the records. The new procedure was really much less valid than the old. Baur had quite unwarrantably decided that the Sermon on the Mount was one of the most certainly genuine of the discourses ascribed to Jesus;[5] and Strauss, while exhibiting a reserve of doubt[6] as to all "such speeches," nonetheless committed himself to the "certain" genuineness alike of the Sermon and of the seven parables in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew.[7] Many scholars who continue to hold by the historicity of Jesus have since recognized that the Sermon is no real discourse, but a compilation of gnomic sayings or maxims previously current in Jewish literature.[8] Thus the certainties of Baur and Strauss pass into the category of the cruder certainties which Strauss impugned; and the latter left the life of Jesus an unsolved enigma after all his analysis.

As he himself noted, the German New Testament criticism of the previous twenty years had "run to seed"[9] in a multitude of treatises on the sources, aims, composition, and mutual relations of the Synoptics, as if these were the final issues. They had settled nothing; and after a lapse of fifty years the same problems are being endlessly discussed. The scientific course for Strauss would have been to develop more radically the method of his first *Life:* failing to do this, he made no new contribution to the problem, though he deftly enough indicated how little difference there was, save in formula, between Baur's negations and his own.

[1] *Gesch. der Politik, Kultur, und Aufklärung des 18ten Jahrh.* 4 Bde. 1843–45; *Gesch. der französ. Revolution,* 3 Bde. 1847.
[2] *Russland und das Germanenthum,* 1847. [3] Lichtenberger, p. 378.
[4] *Philo, Strauss, Renan, und das Urchristenthum,* 1874; *Christus und die Cäsaren,* 1877.
[5] *Das Christenthum und die chr. Kirche,* 1854, p. 34.
[6] *Das Leben Jesu für das deutsche Volk bearbeitet,* § 41, 3te Aufl. p. 254, 1st par.
[7] *Id. ib.* [8] Cp. *Christianity and Mythology,* pt. iii, div. ii, § 6.
[9] Pref. to second *Leben Jesu,* ed. cited, p. xv.

Something of the explanation is to be detected in the sub-title, "Adapted for the German People." From his first entrance into the arena he had met with endless *odium theologicum;* being at once deprived of his post as a philosophical lecturer at Tübingen, and virulently denounced on all hands. His proposed appointment to a chair at Zürich in 1839, as we have seen, led there to something approaching a revolution. Later, he found that acquaintance with him was made a ground of damage to his friends; and though he had actually been elected to the Wirtemberg Diet in 1848 by his fellow citizens of Ludwigsburg town, after being defeated in his candidature for the new parliament at Frankfort through the hostility of the rural voters, he had abundant cause to regard himself as a banned person in Germany. A craving for the goodwill of the people as against the hatred of the priests was thus very naturally and justifiably operative in the conception of his second work; and this none the less because his fundamental political conservatism had soon cut short his representation of radical Ludwigsburg. As he justly said, the question of the true history of Christianity was not one for theologians alone. But the emotional aim affected the intellectual process. As previously in his Life of Ulrich von Hutten, he strove to establish the proposition that the new Reformation he desired was akin to the old; and that the Germans, as the "people of the Reformation," would show themselves true to their past by casting out the religion of dogma and supernaturalism. Such an attempt to identify the spirit of freethought with the old spirit of Bibliolatry was in itself fantastic, and could not create a genuine movement, though the book had a wide audience. The *Glaubenslehre*, in which he made good his maxim that "the true criticism of dogma is its history," is a sounder performance. Strauss's avowed desire to write a book as suitable to Germans as was Renan's *Vie de Jésus* to Frenchmen was something less than scientific. The right book would be written for all nations.

Like most other Germans, Strauss exulted immensely over the war of 1870. In what is now recognized as the national manner, he wrote two boastful open-letters to Renan explaining that whatsoever Germany did was right, and whatsoever France did was wrong, and that the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine was altogether just. These letters form an important contribution to the vast cairn of self-praise raised by latter-day German culture. But Strauss's literary life ended on a nobler note and in a higher warfare. After all his efforts at popularity, and all his fraternization with his people on the ground of racial animosity (not visible in his volume

of lectures on *Voltaire*, written and delivered at the request of the Princess Alice), his fundamental sincerity moved him to produce a final "Confession," under the title of *The Old and the New Faith* (1872). It asked the questions: "Are we still Christians?"; "Have we still religion?"; "How do we conceive the world?"; "How do we order our life?"; and it answered them all in a calmly and uncompromisingly naturalistic sense, dismissing all that men commonly call religious belief. The book as a whole is heterogeneous in respect of its two final chapters, "Of our Great Poets" and "Of our Great Musicians," which seem to have been appended by way of keeping up the attitude of national fraternity evoked by the war. But they could not and did not avail to conciliate the theologians, who opened fire on the book with all their old animosity, and with an unconcealed delight in the definite committal of the great negative critic to an attitude of practical atheism. The book ran through six editions in as many months, and crystallized much of the indefinite freethinking of Germany into something clearer and firmer. All the more was it a new engine of strife and disintegration; and the aging author, shocked but steadied by the unexpected outburst of hostility, penned a quatrain to himself, ending: "In storm hast thou begun; in storm shalt thou end."

On the last day of the year he wrote an "afterword" summing up his work and his position. He had not written, he declared, by way of contending with opponents; he had sought rather to commune with those of his own way of thinking; and to them, he felt, he had the right to appeal to live up to their convictions, not compromising with other opinions, and not adhering to any Church. For his "Confession" he anticipated the thanks of a more enlightened future generation. "The time of agreement," he concluded, "will come, as it came for the *Leben Jesu;* only this time I shall not live to see it."[1] A little more than a year later (1874) he passed away.

It is noteworthy that he should have held that agreement *had* come as to the first *Leben Jesu*. He was in fact convinced that all educated men—at least in Germany—had ceased to believe in miracles and the supernatural, however they might affect to conform to orthodoxy. And, broadly speaking, this was true: all New Testament criticism of any standing had come round to the naturalistic point of view. But, as we have seen, the second *Leben Jesu* was far enough from reaching a solid historical footing;

[1] Zeller, *David Friedrich Strauss*, 2te Aufl. p. 113.

and the generation which followed made only a piecemeal and unsystematic advance to a scientific solution.

8. And it was long before even Strauss's early method of scientific criticism was applied to the initial problems of Old Testament history. The investigation lagged strangely. Starting from the clues given by Hobbes, Spinoza, and Simon, and above all by the suggestion of Astruc (1753) as to the twofold element implied in the God-names Jehovah and Elohim, it had proceeded, for sheer lack of radical skepticism, on the assumption that the Pentateuchal history was true. On this basis, modern Old Testament criticism of a professional kind may be said to have been founded by Eichhorn, who hoped by a quasi-rationalistic method to bring back unbelievers to belief.[1] Of his successors, some, like Ilgen, were ahead of their time; some, like De Wette, failed to make progress in their criticism; some, like Ewald, remained always arbitrary; and some of the ablest and most original, as Vatke, failed to coördinate fully their critical methods and results.[2] Thus, despite all the German activity, little sure progress had been made, apart from discrimination of sources, between the issue of the *Critical Remarks on the Hebrew Scriptures* of the Scotch Catholic priest, Dr. GEDDES, in 1800, and the publication of the first part of the work of Bishop COLENSO on *The Pentateuch* (1862). This, by the admission of KUENEN, who had begun as a rather narrow believer,[3] corrected the initial error of the German specialists by applying to the narrative the common-sense tests suggested long before by Voltaire.[4] That academic scholarship thus wasted two generations in its determination to adhere to the "reverent" method, and in its aversion to the "irreverence" which proceeded on the simple power to see facts, is a sufficient comment on the Kantian doctrine that it was the business of scholars to adapt the sacred books to popular needs. Tampering with the judgment of their flocks, the German theologians injured their own.

As of old, part of the explanation lay in the malignant resistance of orthodoxy to every new advance. We have seen how Strauss's appointment to a chair at Zürich was met by Swiss pietism. The same spirit sought to revert, even in "intellectually free" Germany, to its old methods of repression. The authorities of Berlin discussed

[1] Cheyne, *Founders of Old Testament Criticism*, 1893, p. 16. Eichhorn seems to have known Astruc's work only at second-hand, yet, without him, it might be contended, Astruc's work would have been completely lost to science. (*Id.* p. 23.)

[2] See Dr. Cheyne's surveys, which are those of a liberal ecclesiastic—a point of view on which he has since notably advanced.

[3] Cheyne, pp. 187–88.

[4] Kuenen, *The Hexateuch*, Eng. tr introd. pp. xiv–xvii.

with Neander the propriety of suppressing Strauss's *Leben Jesu*;[1] and after a time those who shared his views were excluded even from philosophical chairs.[2] Later, the *brochure* in which Edgar Bauer defended his brother Bruno against his opponents (1842) was seized by the police; and in the following year, for publishing *The Strife of Criticism with Church and State*, the same writer was sentenced to four years' imprisonment. In private life, persecution was carried on in the usual ways; and the virulence of the theological resistance recalled the palmy days of Lutheran polemics. In the sense that the mass of orthodoxy held its ground for the time being, the attack failed. Naturally the most advanced and uncompromisingly scientific positions were least discussed, the stress of dispute going on around the criticism which modified without annihilating the main elements in the current creed, or that which did the work of annihilation on a popular level of thought. Only in our day is German "expert" criticism beginning openly to reckon with propositions fairly and fully made out by German writers of three or more generations back. Thus in 1781 Corodi in his *Geschichte des Chiliasmus* dwelt on the pre-Hebraic origins of the belief in angels, in immortality, and heaven and hell, and on the Persian derivation of the Jewish seven archangels; Wegscheider in 1819 in his *Institutes of Theology* indicated further connections of the same order, and cited pagan parallels to the virgin-birth; J. A. L. Richter in the same year pointed to Indian and Persian precedents for the Logos and many other Christian doctrines; and several other writers, Strauss included, pointed to both Persian and Babylonian influences on Jewish theology and myth.[3] The mythologist and Hebraist F. Korn (who wrote as "F. Nork"), in a series of learned and vigorous but rather loosely speculative works,[4] indicated many of the mythological elements in Christianity, and endorsed many of the astronomical arguments of Dupuis, while holding to the historicity of Jesus.[5]

When even these theses were in the main ignored, more mordant doctrine was necessarily burked. Such subversive criticism of religious history as Ghillany's *Die Menschenopfer der alten Hebräer* (1842), insisting that human sacrifice had been habitual in early Jewry, and

[1] Dr. Beard, in *Voices of the Church in Reply to Strauss*, 1845, pp. 16–17.
[2] Zeller, *D. F. Strauss*, Eng. tr. 1879, p. 56.
[3] See Gunkel, *Zum religionsgeschichtlichen Verständnis des Neuen Testaments*, 1903, pp. 1–2, *note*.
[4] *Mythen der alten Perser als Quellen christlicher Glaubenslehren*, 1835; *Der Mystagog, oder Deutung der Geheimenlehren, Symbole und Feste der christlichen Kirche*, 1838; *Rabbinische Quellen und Parallelen zu neutestamentlichen Schriftstellen*, 1839; *Biblische Mythologie des alten und neuen Testaments*, 1842; *Der Festkalender*, 1847, etc.
[5] *Der Mystagog*, 1838, p. vii, *note*, and p. 241.

that ritual cannibalism underlay the paschal eucharist, found even fewer students prepared to appreciate it than did the searching ethico-philosophical criticism passed on the Christian creed by Feuerbach. F. Daumer,[1] who in 1842 published a treatise on the same lines as Ghillany's (*Der Feuer und Molochdienst*), and followed it up in 1847 with another on the Christian mysteries, nearly as drastic, wavered later in his rationalism and avowed his conversion to a species of faith. Hence a certain setback for his school. In France the genial German revolutionist and exile Ewerbeck published, under the titles of *Qu'est ce que la Religion ?* and *Qu'est ce que la Bible ?* (1850), two volumes of very freely edited translations from Feuerbach, Daumer, Ghillany, Lützelberger (on the simple humanity of Jesus), and Bruno Bauer, avowing that after vainly seeking a publisher for years he had produced the books at his own expense. He had, however, so mutilated the originals as to make the work ineffectual for scholars, without making it attractive to the general public; and there is nothing to show that his formidable-looking arsenal of explosives had much effect on contemporary French thought, which developed on other lines.

Old Testament criticism, nevertheless, has in the last generation been much developed, after having long missed some of the first lines of advance. After Colenso's rectification of the fundamental error as to the historicity of the narrative of the Pentateuch, so long and so obstinately persisted in by the German specialists in contempt of Voltaire, the "higher criticism" proceeded with such substantial certainty on the scientific lines of KUENEN and WELLHAUSEN that, whereas Professor Robertson Smith had to leave the Free Church of Scotland in 1881[2] for propagating Kuenen's views, before the century was out Canons of the English Church were doing the work with the acquiescence of perhaps six clergymen out of ten; and American preachers were found promoting an edition of the Bible which exhibited some of the critical results to the general reader. Heresy on this score had "become merchandise." Nevertheless, the professional tendency to compromise (a result of economic and other pressures) keeps most of the ecclesiastical critics far short of the outspoken utterances of M. M. KALISCH, who in his *Commentary on Leviticus* (1867–72) repudiates every vestige of the doctrine of inspiration.[3] Later clerical critics, notably Canon Driver, use

[1] See Nork's preamble on *Hr. Fr. Daumer, ein kurzweiliger Molochsfänger*, in his *Biblische Mythologie*, Bd. i.

[2] After being acquitted in 1880. The first charge was founded on his *Britannica* article "Bible"; the second on the article "Hebrew Language and Literature," which appeared after the acquittal.

[3] These utterances were noted for their "vigour and independence" by Kuenen, and also

language on that subject which cannot be read with critical respect.[1] But among students at the end of the century the orthodox view was practically extinct. Whereas the defenders of the faith even a generation before habitually stood to the "argument from prophecy," the conception of prophecy as prediction has now become meaningless as regards the so-called Mosaic books; and the constant disclosure of interpolations and adaptations in the others has discredited it as regards the "prophets" themselves. For the rest, much of the secular history still accepted is tentatively reduced to myth in the *Geschichte Israels* of Hugo Winckler (1895–1900). The peculiar theory of Dr. Cheyne is no less "destructive."

9. In New Testament criticism, though the strict critical method of Strauss's first book was not faithfully followed, critical research went on continuously; and the school of F. C. Baur of Tübingen in particular imposed a measure of rational criticism on theologians in general. Apart from Strauss, Baur was probably the ablest Christian scholar of his day. Always lamed by his professionalism, he yet toiled endlessly to bring scientific method into Christian research. His *Paulus, der Apostel Jesu Christi*, 1845; *Kritische Untersuchungen über die Kanonischen Evangelien*, 1847; and *Das Christenthum und die christliche Kirche der drei ersten Jahrhunderte*, 1853, were epoch-marking works, which recast so radically, in the name of orthodoxy, the historical conception of Christian origins, that he figured as the most unsettling critic of his time after Strauss. With his earlier researches in the history of the first Christian sects and his history of the Church, they constitute a memorable mass of studious and original work. In the case of the Tübingen school as of every other there was "reaction," with the usual pretence by professional orthodoxy that the innovating criticism had been disposed of; but no real refutation has ever taken place. Where Baur reduced the genuine Pauline epistles to four, the last years of the century witnessed the advent of VAN MANEN, who, following up earlier suggestions, wrought out the thesis that the epistles are all alike supposititious. This may or may not hold good; but there has been no restoration of traditionary faith among the mass of open-minded inquirers. Such work as Zeller's *Contents and Origin of the Acts of the Apostles* (1854), produced in Baur's circle, has substantially

by Dr. Cheyne, who remarks that the earlier work of Kalisch on *Exodus* (1855) was somewhat behind the critical standpoint of contemporary investigators on the Continent. (*Founders of Old Testament Criticism*, p. 207.)

[1] See his *Introduction to the Study of the Old Testament*, pref. "It is the spirit of compromise that I chiefly dread for our younger students," wrote Dr. Cheyne in 1893 (*Founders*, p. 247). His courteous criticism of Dr. Driver does not fail to point the moral in that writer's direction.

held its ground; and such a comparatively "safe" book of the next generation as Weizsäcker's *Apostolic Age* (Eng. tr. of 2nd ed. 1893) leaves no doubt as to the untrustworthiness of the *Acts*. Thus at the close of the century the current professional treatises indicated a "Christianity" stripped not only of all supernaturalism, and therefore of the main religious content of the historic creed, but even of credibility as regards large parts of the non-supernaturalist narratives of its sacred books. The minute analysis and collocation of texts which has occupied so much of critical industry has but made clearer the extreme precariousness of every item in the records. The amount of credit for historicity that continues to be given to them is demonstrably unjustifiable on scientific grounds; and the stand for a "Christianity without dogma" is more and more clearly seen to be an economic adjustment, not an outcome of faithful criticism.

10. The movement of Biblical and other criticism in Germany has had a significant effect on the supply of students for the theological profession. The numbers of Protestant and Catholic theological students in all Germany have varied as follows:—*Protestant:* 1831, 4,147; 1851, 1,631; 1860, 2,520; 1876, 1,539; 1882–83, 3,168. *Catholic:* 1831, 1,801; 1840, 866; 1850, 1,393; 1860, 1,209; 1880, 619.[1] Thus, under the reign of reaction which set in after 1848 there was a prolonged recovery; and again since 1876 the figures rise for Protestantism through financial stimulus. When, however, we take population into account, the main movement is clear. In an increasing proportion, the theological students come from the rural districts (69·4 in 1861–70), the towns furnishing ever fewer;[2] so that the conservative measures do but outwardly and formally affect the course of thought; the clergy themselves showing less and less inclination to make clergymen of their sons.[3] Even among the Catholic population, though that has increased from ten millions in 1830 to sixteen millions in 1880, the number of theological students has fallen from eleven to four per 100,000 inhabitants.[4] Thus, after many "reactions" and much Bismarckism, the *Zeit-Geist* in Germany was still pronouncedly skeptical in all classes in 1881,[5] when the church accommodation in Berlin provided only two per cent. of the population, and even that provision outwent the demand.[6]

[1] Conrad, *The German Universities for the Last Fifty Years*, Eng. tr. 1885, p. 74. See p. 100 as to the financial measures taken; and p. 105 as to the essentially financial nature of the "reaction."
[2] *Id.* p. 103. [3] *Id.* p. 104. [4] *Id.* p. 112. See pp. 118–19 as to Austria. [5] *Id.* pp. 97–98.
[6] White, *Warfare*, i, 239. In February, 1914, on a given Sunday, out of a Protestant population of over two millions, only 35,000 persons attended church in Berlin. Art. on "Creeds, Heresy-Hunting, and Secession in German Protestantism To-day," in *Hibbert Journal* for July, 1914, p. 722.

And though there have been yet other alleged reactions since, and the imperial influence is zealously used for orthodoxy, a large proportion of the intelligent workers in the towns remain socialistic and freethinking; and the mass of the educated classes remain unorthodox in the teeth of the socialist menace. Reactionary professors can make an academic fashion: the majority of instructed men remain tacitly naturalistic.

Alongside of the inveterate rationalism of modern Germany, however, a no less inveterate bureaucratism preserves a certain official conformity to religion. University freedom does not extend to open and direct criticism of the orthodox creed. On the other hand, the applause won by Virchow in 1877 on his declaration against the doctrine of evolution, and the tactic resorted to by him in putting upon that doctrine the responsibility of Socialist violence, are instances of the normal operation of the lower motives against freedom in scientific teaching.[1] The pressure operates in other spheres in Germany, especially under such a regimen as the present. Men who never go to church save on official occasions, and who have absolutely no belief in the Church's doctrine, nevertheless remain nominally its adherents;[2] and the Press laws make it peculiarly difficult to reach the common people with freethinking literature, save through Socialist channels. Thus the Catholic Church is perhaps nowhere—save in Ireland and the United States —more practically influential than in nominally "Protestant" Germany, where it wields a compact vote of a hundred or more in the Reichstag, and can generally count on well-filled churches as beside the half-empty temples of Protestantism.

Another circumstance partly favourable to reaction is the simple maintenance of all the old theological chairs in the universities. As the field of scientific work widens, and increasing commerce raises the social standard of comfort, men of original intellectual power grow less apt to devote themselves to theological pursuits even under the comparatively free conditions which so long kept German Biblical scholarship far above that of other countries. It can hardly be said that men of the mental calibre of Strauss, Baur, Volkmar, and Wellhausen continue to arise among the specialists in their studies. Harnack, the most prominent German Biblical scholar of

[1] See Haeckel's *Freedom in Science and Teaching*, Eng. tr. with pref. by Huxley, 1879, pp. xix, xxv, xxvii, 89–90; and Clifford.

[2] Büchner, for straightforwardly renouncing his connection with the State Church a generation ago, was blamed by many who held his philosophic opinions. In our own day, there has arisen a considerable *Austrittsbewegung*, or "Withdrawal Movement"; while creedless clerics strive to remain inside a Church bent on ejecting them. A. D. McLaren, in *Hibbert Journal* for July, 1914, art. cited.

our day, despite his great learning, creates no such impression of originality and insight, and, though latterly forced forward by more independent minds, exhibits often a very uncritical orthodoxy. Thus it is à priori possible enough that the orthodox reactions so often claimed have actually occurred, in the sense that the experts have reverted to a prior type. A scientifically-minded "theologian" in Germany has now little official scope for his faculty save in the analysis of the Hebrew Sacred Books and the New Testament documents as such; and this has been on the whole very well done, short of the point of express impeachment of the historic delusion; but there is a limit to the attraction of such studies for minds of a modern cast. Thus there is always a chance that chairs will be filled by men of another type.

11. On a less extensive scale than in Germany, critical study of the sacred books made some progress in England, France, and America in the first half of the century; though for a time the attention even of the educated world was centred much more upon the Oxford "tractarian" religious reaction than upon the movement of rationalism. The reaction, associated mainly with the name of John Henry Newman, was rather against the political Erastianism and æsthetic apathy of the Whig type of Christian than against German or other criticism, of which Newman knew little. But against the attitude of those moderate Anglicans who were disposed to disestablish the Church in Ireland and to modernize the liturgy somewhat, the language of the "Tracts for the Times" is as authoritarian and anti-rationalistic as that of Catholics denouncing free-thought. Such expressions as "the filth of heretical novelty"[1] are meant to apply to anything in the nature of innovation; the causes at stake are ritual and precedent, the apostolic succession and the status of the priest, not the truth of revelation or the credibility of the scriptures. The third Tract appeals to the clergy to "resist the alteration of even one jot or tittle" of the liturgy; and concerning the burial service the line of argument is: "Do you pretend you can discriminate the wheat from the tares? Of course not." All attempts even to modify the ritual are an "abuse of reason"; and the true believer is adjured to stand fast in the ancient ways.[2] At a pinch he is to "consider what *Reason* says; which surely, as well as Scripture, was given us for *religious* ends";[3] but the only "reason" thus recognized is one which accepts the whole apparatus of revelation. Previous to and alongside of this single-minded

[1] *Tracts for the Times*, vol. ii, ed. 1839; *Records of the Church*, No. xxiv.
[2] *Tracts for the Times*, No. 3. [3] *Id.* No. 32.

reversion to the ideals of the Dark Ages—a phenomenon not unconnected with the revival of romanticism by Scott and Chateaubriand—there was going on a movement of modernism, of which one of the overt traces is Milman's *History of the Jews* (1829), a work to-day regarded as harmless even by the orthodox, but sufficient in its time to let Newman see whither religious "Liberalism" was heading.

Other and later researches dug much deeper into the problems of religious historiography. The Unitarian C. C. HENNELL produced an *Inquiry Concerning the Origin of Christianity* (1838), so important for its time as to be thought worth translating into German by Strauss; and this found a considerable response from the educated English public of its day. In the preface to his second edition (1841) Hennell spoke very plainly of "the large and probably increasing amount of unbelief in all classes around us"; and made the then remarkably courageous declarations that in his experience "neither deism, pantheism, nor even atheism indicates modes of thought incompatible with uprightness and benevolence"; and that "the real or affected horror which it is still a prevailing custom to exhibit towards their names would be better reserved for those of the selfish, the cruel, the bigot, and other tormentors of mankind." It was in the circle of Hennell that MARIAN EVANS, later to become famous as GEORGE ELIOT, grew into a rationalist in despite of her religious temperament; and it was she who, when Hennell's bride gave up the task, undertook the toil of translating Strauss's *Leben Jesu*—though at many points she "thought him wrong."[1] In the churches he had of course no overt acceptance. At this stage, English orthodoxy was of such a cast that the pious Tregelles, himself fiercely opposed to all forms of rationalism, had to complain that the most incontrovertible corrections of the current text of the New Testament were angrily denounced.[2]

In the next generation THEODORE PARKER in the United States, developing his critical faculty chiefly by study of the Germans, at the cost of much obloquy forced some knowledge of critical results and a measure of theistic or pantheistic rationalism on the attention of the orthodox world; promoting at the same time a semi-philosophic, semi-ethical reaction against the Calvinistic theology of Jonathan Edwards, theretofore prevalent among the orthodox of New England. In the old country a number of writers developed new movements of criticism from theistic points of view. F. W.

[1] Cross's *Life*, 1-vol. ed. p. 79.
[2] *Account of the Printed Text of the Greek N. T.*, 1854, pref. and pp. 47, 112-13, 266.

NEWMAN, the scholarly brother of John Henry,[1] produced a book entitled *The Soul* (1849), and another, *Phases of Faith* (1853), which had much influence in promoting rationalism of a rather rigidly theistic cast. R. W. MACKAY in the same period published two learned treatises, *A Sketch of the Rise and Progress of Christianity* (1854), notably scientific in method for its time; and *The Progress of the Intellect as Exemplified in the Religious Development of the Greeks and Hebrews* (1850), which won the admiration of Buckle; "George Eliot" translated Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity* (1854) under her own name, Marian Evans; and W. R. GREG, one of the leading publicists of his day, put forth a rationalist study of *The Creed of Christendom: Its Foundations Contrasted with its Superstructure* (1850), which has gone through many editions and is still reprinted. In 1864 appeared *The Prophet of Nazareth*, by Evan Powell Meredith, who had been a Baptist minister in Wales. The book is a bulky prize essay on the theme of New Testament eschatology, which develops into a deistic attack on the central Christian dogma and on gospel ethics. Another zealous theist, THOMAS SCOTT, whose pamphlet-propaganda on deistic lines had so wide an influence during many years, produced an *English Life of Jesus* (1871), which, though less important than the works of Strauss and less popular than those of Renan, played a considerable part in the disintegration of the traditional faith among English churchmen. Still the primacy in critical research on scholarly lines lay with the Germans; and it was the results of their work that were co-ordinated, from a theistic standpoint,[2] in the anonymous work, *Supernatural Religion* (1874–77), a massive and decisive performance, too powerful to be disposed of by the episcopal and other attacks made upon it.[3] Since its assimilation the orthodox or inspirationist view of the gospels has lost credit among competent scholars even within the churches. The battleground is now removed to the problem of the historicity of the ostensible origins of the cult; and scholarly orthodoxy takes for granted many positions which fifty years ago were typical of "German rationalism."

12. In France systematic criticism of the sacred books recommenced in the second half of the century with such writings as

[1] A third brother, Charles Robert, became an atheist. This, as well as his psychic infirmity, insures him sufficiently severe treatment at the hands of his theistic brother in the introduction to the latter's *Contributions Chiefly to the Early History of the late Cardinal Newman*, 1891.

[2] Latterly abandoned by the learned author, who before his death disclosed his name —W. R. Cassels.

[3] See the testimonies of Pfleiderer, *The Development of Theology since Kant*, Eng. tr. 1890, p. 397, and Dr. Samuel Davidson, *Introd. to the Study of the New Testament*, pref. to 2nd ed.

those of P. LARROQUE (*Examen Critique des doctrines de la religion chrétienne*, 1860); GUSTAVE D'EICHTHAL (*Les Évangiles*, ptie. i, 1863); and ALPHONSE PEYRAT (*Histoire élémentaire et critique de Jésus*, 1864); whereafter the rationalistic view was applied with singular literary charm, if with imperfect consistency, by RENAN in his series of seven volumes on the origins of Christianity, and with more scientific breadth of view by ERNEST HAVET in his *Christianisme et ses Origines* (1872, etc.). Renan's *Vie de Jésus* (1863) especially has been read throughout the civilized world. It has been quite justly pronounced, by German and other critics, a romance; but no other "life" properly so called has been anything else, Strauss's first *Life* being an analysis rather than a construction; and the epithet was but an unwitting avowal that to accept the gospels, barring miracles, as biography—which is what Renan did—is to be committed to the unhistorical. He began by accepting the fourth as equipollent with the synoptics; and upon this Strauss in his second *Life* confidently called for a recantation, which came in due course. But Renan, in his fitful way, had critical glimpses which were denied to Strauss—for instance, as to the material of the Sermon on the Mount. The whole series of the *Origines*, which wound up with *Marc Aurèle* (1882), has a similar fluctuating value, showing on the whole a progressive critical sense. The *Saint Paul*, for example, at the close suddenly discards the traditional view previously accepted in *Les Apôtres*, and recognizes that the ministry of Paul can have been no more than a propaganda of small conventicles, whose total membership throughout the Empire could not have been above a thousand. But Renan's total service consisted rather in a highly artistic and winning application of rational historical methods to early Christian history, with the effect of displacing the traditionist method, than in any lasting or comprehensive solution of the problem of the origins. Havet's survey is both corrective and complementary to his. Renan's influence on opinion throughout the world, however, was enormous, were it only because he was one of the most finished literary artists of his time.

SECTION 3.—POETRY AND GENERAL LITERATURE

1. The whole imaginative literature of Europe, in the generation after the French Revolution, reveals directly or indirectly the transmutation that the eighteenth century had worked in religious thought. Either it reacts against or it develops the rationalistic movement. In France the literary reaction is one of the first factors in the

orthodox revival. Its leader and type was Chateaubriand, in whose typical work, the *Génie du Christianisme* (1802), lies the proof that, whatever might be the "shallowness" of Voltairism, it was profundity beside the philosophy of the majority who repelled it. On one who now reads it with the slightest scientific preparation, the book makes an impression in parts of something like fatuity. The handling of the scientific question at the threshold of the inquiry is that of a man incapable of a scientific idea. All the accumulating evidence of geology and palæontology is disposed of by the grotesque theorem that God made the world out of nothing with all the marks of antiquity upon it—the oaks at the start bearing "last year's nests" —on the ground that, "if the world were not at once young and old, the great, the serious, the moral would disappear from nature, for these sentiments by their essence attach to antique things."[1] In the same fashion the fable of the serpent is with perfect gravity homologated as a literal truth, on the strength of an anecdote about the charming of a rattlesnake with music.[2] It is humiliating, but instructive, to realize that only a century ago a "Christian reaction," in a civilized country, was inspired by such an order of ideas; and that in the nation of Laplace, with his theory in view, it was the fashion thus to prattle in the taste of the Dark Ages.[3] The book is merely the eloquent expression of a nervous recoil from everything savouring of cool reason and clear thought, a recoil partly initiated by the sheer stress of excitement of the near past; partly fostered by the vague belief that freethinking in religion had caused the Revolution; partly enhanced by the tendency of every warlike period to develop emotional rather than reflective life. What was really masterly in Chateaubriand was the style; and sentimental pietism had now the prestige of fine writing, so long the specialty of the other side. Yet a generation of monarchism served to wear out the ill-based credit of the literary reaction; and *belles lettres* began to be rationalistic as soon as politics began again to be radical. Thus the prestige of the neo-Christian school was already spent before the revolution of 1848;[4] and the inordinate vanity of Chateaubriand, who died in that year, had undone his special influence still earlier. He had created merely a literary mode and sentiment.

2. The literary history of France since his death decides the question, so far as it can be thus decided. From 1848 till our own day it has been predominantly naturalistic and non-religious. After

[1] Ptie. i, liv. i, ch. v.
[2] *Id.* i, liv. iii, ch. ii.
[3] It is further to be remembered, however, that Mr. Matthew Arnold saw fit to defend Chateaubriand, calling him "great," when his fame was being undone by common sense.
[4] C. Wordsworth, *Diary in France*, 1845, pp. 55–56, 124, 204.

Guizot and the Thierrys, the nearest approach to Christianity by an influential French historian is perhaps in the case of the very heterodox Edgar Quinet. MICHELET was a mere heretic in the eyes of the faithful, Saisset describing his book *Du Prêtre, de la Femme, et de la Famille* (1845), as a "renaissance of Voltaireanism."[1] His whole brilliant History, indeed, is from beginning to end rationalistic, challenging as it does all the decorous traditions, exposing the failure of the faith to civilize, pronouncing that "the monastic Middle Age is an age of idiots" and the scholastic world which followed it an age of artificially formed fools,[2] flouting dogma and discrediting creed over each of their miscarriages.[3] And he was popular, withal, not only because of his vividness and unfailing freshness, but because his convictions were those of the best intelligence around him. In poetry and fiction the predominance of one or other shade of free-thinking is signal. Balzac, who grew up in the age of reaction, makes essentially for rationalism by his intense analysis; and after him the difficulty is to find a great French novelist who is not frankly rationalistic. George Sand will probably not be claimed by orthodoxy; and BEYLE, CONSTANT, FLAUBERT, MÉRIMÉE, ZOLA, DAUDET, MAUPASSANT, and the DE GONCOURTS make a list against which can be set only the names of M. Bourget, an artist of the second order, and of the distinguished *décadent* Huysmans, who became a Trappist after a life marked by a philosophy and practice of an extremely different complexion.

3. In French poetry the case is hardly otherwise. BÉRANGER, who passed for a Voltairean, did indeed claim to have "saved from the wreck an indestructible belief";[4] and Lamartine goes to the side of Christianity; but de Musset, the most inspired of *décadents*, was no more Christian than Heine, save for what a critic has called "la banale religiosité de *l'Espoir en Dieu*";[5] and the pessimist Baudelaire had not even that to show. De Musset's absurd attack on Voltaire in his Byronic poem, *Rolla*, well deserves the same epithets. It is a mere product of hysteria, representing neither knowledge nor reflection. The grandiose theism of VICTOR HUGO,

[1] *Essais sur la philosophie et la religion*, 1845, p. 193.
[2] *Histoire*, tom. vii, *Renaissance*, introd. § 6.
[3] M. Faguet writes (*Études sur le XIXe Siècle*, p. 352) that "Michelet croit à l'âme plus qu'à Dieu, encore que profondément déiste. Les théories philosophiques modernes lui étaient pénibles." This may be true, though hardly any evidence is offered on the latter head; but when M. Faguet writes, "Est-il chrétien? Je n'en sais rien.....mais il sympathise avec la pensée chrétienne," he seems to ignore the preface to the later editions of the *Histoire de la révolution française*. To pronounce Christianity, as Michelet there does, essentially anti-democratic, and therefore hostile to the Revolution, was, for him, to condemn it.
[4] Letter to Sainte-Beuve, cited by Levallois, *Sainte-Beuve*, 1872, p. 14.
[5] Lanson, *Hist. de la litt. française*, p. 951.

again, is stamped only with his own image and superscription; and in his great contemporary LECONTE DE LISLE we have one of the most convinced and aggressive freethinkers of the century, a fine scholar and a self-controlled pessimist, who felt it well worth his while to write a little *Popular History of Christianity* (1871) which would have delighted d'Holbach. It is significant, on the other hand, that the exquisite religious verse of Verlaine was the product of an incurable neuropath, like the later work of Huysmans, and stands for decadence pure and simple. While French *belles lettres* thus in general made for rationalism, criticism was naturally not behindhand. Sainte-Beuve, the most widely appreciative though not the most scientific or just of critics, had only a literary sympathy with the religious types over whom he spent so much effusive research;[1] EDMOND SCHERER was an unbeliever almost against his will; TAINE, though reactionary on political grounds in his latter years, was the typical French rationalist of his time; and though M. Brunetière, whose preferences were all for Bossuet, made "the bankruptcy of science" the text of his very facile philosophy, the most scientific and philosophic head in the whole line of French critics, the late ÉMILE HENNEQUIN, was wholly a rationalist; and even the rather reactionary Jules Lemaître did not maintain his early attitude of austerity towards Renan.

4. In England it was due above all to Shelley that the very age of reaction was confronted with unbelief in lyric form. His immature *Queen Mab* was vital enough with conviction to serve as an inspiration to a whole host of unlettered freethinkers not only in its own generation but in the next. Its notes preserved, and greatly expanded, the tract entitled *The Necessity of Atheism*, for which he was expelled from Oxford; and against his will it became a people's book, the law refusing him copyright in his own work, on the memorable principle that there could be no "protection" for a book setting forth pernicious opinions. Whether he might not in later life, had he survived, have passed to a species of mystic Christianity, reacting like Coleridge, but with a necessary difference, is a question raised by parts of the *Hellas*. Gladstone seems to have thought

[1] "L'incrédulité de Sainte-Beuve était sincère, radicale, et absolue. Elle a été invariable et invincible pendant trente ans. Voilà la vérité" (Jules Levallois, *Sainte-Beuve*, 1872, préf. p. xxxiii). M. Levallois, who writes as a theist, was one of Sainte-Beuve's secretaries. M. Zola, who spoke of the famous critic's rationalism as "une négation n'osant conclure," admitted later that it was hardly possible for him to speak more boldly than he did (*Documents Littéraires*, 1881, pp. 314, 325–28). And M. Lavisse has shown (as cited above, p. 406) with what courage he supported Duruy in the Senate against the attacks of the exasperated clerical party. See also his letter of 1867 to Louis Viardot in the *avant-propos* to that writer's *Libre Examen: Apologie d'un Incrédule*, 6e édit. 1881, p. 3.

that he had in him such a potentiality. But Shelley's work, as done, sufficed to keep for radicalism and rationalism the crown of song as against the final Tory orthodoxy[1] of the elderly Wordsworth and of Southey; and Coleridge's zeal for (amended) dogma came upon him after his hour of poetic transfiguration was past.

> And even Coleridge, who held the heresies of a modal Trinity and the non-expiatory character of the death of Christ, was widely distrusted by the pious, and expressed himself privately in terms which would have outraged them. Miracles, he declared, "are supererogatory. The law of God and the great principles of the Christian religion would have been the same had Christ never assumed humanity. It is for these things, and for such as these, for telling unwelcome truths, that I have been termed an atheist. It is for these opinions that William Smith assured the Archbishop of Canterbury that I was (what half the clergy are in *their lives*) an atheist. Little do these men know what atheism is. Not one man in a thousand has either strength of mind or goodness of heart to be an atheist. I repeat it. Not one man in ten thousand has goodness of heart or strength of mind to be an atheist." Allsopp's *Letters*, etc., as cited, p. 47. But at other times Coleridge was a defender of the faith, while contemning the methods of the evidential school. *Id.* pp. 13–14, 31.

On the other side, Scott's honest but unintellectual romanticism, as we know from Newman, certainly favoured the Tractarian reaction, to which it was æsthetically though hardly emotionally akin. Yet George Eliot could say in later life that it was the influence of Scott that first unsettled her orthodoxy;[2] meaning, doubtless, that the prevailing secularity of his view of life and his objective handling of sects and faiths excluded even a theistic solution. Scott's orthodoxy was in fact nearly on all fours with his Jacobitism—a matter of temperamental loyalty to a tradition.[3] But the far more potent influence of BYRON, too wayward to hold a firm philosophy, but too intensely alive to realities to be capable of Scott's feudal orthodoxy, must have counted much for heresy even in England, and was one of the literary forces of revolutionary revival for the whole of Europe. Though he never came to a clear atheistical decision as did Shelley,[4]

[1] That Wordsworth was not an orthodox Christian is fairly certain. Both in talk and in poetry he put forth a pantheistic doctrine. Cp. Benn, *Hist. of Eng. Rationalism*, i, 227–29; and Coleridge's letter of Aug. 8, 1820, in Allsopp's *Letters*, etc., *of S. T. Coleridge*, 3rd ed. 1864, pp. 56–57.

[2] Leslie Stephen, *George Eliot*, p. 27.

[3] Mr. Benn (*Hist. of Eng. Rationalism*, i, 226, 309 *sq.*) has some interesting discussions on Scott's relation to religion, but does not take full account of biographical data and of Scott's utterances outside of his novels. The truth probably is that Scott's brain was one with "watertight compartments."

[4] At the age of twenty-five we find him writing to Gifford: "I am no bigot to infidelity, and did not expect that because I doubted the immortality of man I should be charged with denying the existence of God" (letter of June 18, 1813).

and often in private gave himself out for a Calvinist, he so handled theological problems in his *Cain* that he, like Shelley, was refused copyright in his work;[1] and it was widely appropriated for free-thinkers' purposes. The orthodox Southey was on the same grounds denied the right to suppress his early revolutionary drama, *Wat Tyler*, which accordingly was made to do duty in Radical propaganda by freethinking publishers. Keats, again, though he melodiously declaimed, in a boyish mood, against the scientific analysis of the rainbow, and though he never assented to Shelley's impeachments of Christianity, was in no active sense a believer in it, and after his long sickness met death gladly without the "consolations" ascribed to creed.[2]

5. One of the best-beloved names in English literature, Charles Lamb, is on several counts to be numbered with those of the free-thinkers of his day—who included Godwin and Hazlitt—though he had no part in any direct propaganda. Himself at most a Unitarian, but not at all given to argument on points of faith, he did his work for reason partly by way of the subtle and winning humanism of such an essay as *New Year's Eve*, which seems to have been what brought upon him the pedantically pious censure of Southey, apparently for its lack of allusion to a future state; partly by his delicately-entitled letter, *The Tombs in the Abbey*, in which he replied to Southey's stricture. "A book which wants only a sounder religious feeling to be as delightful as it is original" had been Southey's pompous criticism, in a paper on *Infidelity*.[3] In his reply, Lamb commented on Southey's life-long habit of scoffing at the Church of Rome, and gravely repudiated the test of orthodoxy for human character.

> Lamb's words are not generally known, and are worth remembering. "I own," he wrote, "I never could think so considerably of myself as to decline the society of an agreeable or worthy man upon difference of opinion only. The impediments and the facilitations to a sound belief are various and inscrutable as the heart of man. Some believe upon weak principles; others cannot feel the efficacy of the strongest. One of the most candid, most upright, and single-meaning men I ever knew was the late Thomas Holcroft. I believe he never said one thing and meant another in his life; and, as near as I can guess, he never acted otherwise than with the most

[1] By the Court of Chancery, in 1822, the year in which copyright was refused to the *Lectures* of Dr. Lawrence. Harriet Martineau, *History of the Peace*, ii, 87.

[2] W. Sharp, *Life of Severn*, 1892, pp. 86–87, 90, 117–18.

[3] On reading Lamb's severe rejoinder, Southey, in distress, apologized, and Lamb at once relented (*Life and Letters of John Rickman*, by Orlo Williams, 1912, p. 225). Hence the curtailment of Lamb's letter in the ordinary editions of his works.

scrupulous attention to conscience. Ought we to wish the character false for the sake of a hollow compliment to Christianity?" Of the freethinking and unpopular Hazlitt, who had soured towards Lamb in his perverse way, the essayist spoke still more generously. Of Leigh Hunt he speaks more critically, but with the same resolution to stand by a man known as a heretic. But the severest flout to Southey and his Church is in the next paragraph, where, after the avowal that "the last sect with which you can remember me to have made common profession were the Unitarians," he tells how, on the previous Easter Sunday, he had attended the service in Westminster Abbey, and when he would have lingered afterwards among the tombs to meditate, was "turned, like a dog or some profane person, out into the common street, with feelings which I could not help, but not very congenial to the day or the discourse. I do not know," he adds, "that I shall ever venture myself again into one of your churches."

These words were published in the *London Magazine* in 1825; but in the posthumous collected edition of the *Essays of Elia* all the portions above cited were dropped, and the paragraph last quoted from was modified, leaving out the last words. The essay does not seem to have been reprinted in full till it appeared in R. H. Shepherd's edition of 1878. But the original issue in the *London Magazine* created a tradition among the lovers of Lamb, and his name has always been associated with some repute for freethinking. There is further very important testimony as to Lamb's opinions in one of Allsopp's records of the conversation of Coleridge:—

"No, no; Lamb's skepticism has not come lightly, nor is he a skeptic [*sic*: Query, *scoffer?*]. The harsh reproof to Godwin for his contemptuous allusion to Christ before a well-trained child proves that he is not a skeptic [? scoffer]. His mind, never prone to analysis, seems to have been disgusted with the hollow pretences, the false reasonings and absurdities of the rogues and fools with whom all establishments, and all creeds seeking to become established, abound. I look upon Lamb as one hovering between earth and heaven; neither hoping much nor fearing anything. It is curious that he should retain many usages which he learnt or adopted in the fervour of his early religious feelings, now that his faith is in a state of suspended animation. Believe me, who know him well, that Lamb, say what he will, has more of the *essentials* of Christianity than ninety-nine out of a hundred professing Christians. He has all that would still have been Christian had Christ never lived or been made manifest upon earth." (Allsopp's *Letters*, etc., as cited, p. 46.) In connection with the frequently cited anecdote as to Lamb's religious feeling given in Leigh Hunt's *Autobiography* (rep. p. 253), also by Hazlitt (*Winterslow*, essay ii, ed.

1902, p. 39), may be noted the following, given by Allsopp: "After a visit to Coleridge, during which the conversation had taken a religious turn, Leigh Hunt.....expressed his surprise that such a man as Coleridge should, when speaking of Christ, always call him Our Saviour. Lamb, who had been exhilarated by one glass of that gooseberry or raisin cordial which he has so often anathematized, stammered out: 'Ne-ne-never mind what Coleridge says; he is full of fun.'"

6. While a semi-Bohemian like Lamb could thus dare to challenge the reigning bigotry, the graver English writers of the first half of the century who had abandoned or never accepted orthodoxy felt themselves for the most part compelled to silence or ostensible compliance. It was made clear by Carlyle's posthumous *Reminiscences* that he had early turned away from Christian dogma, having in fact given up a clerical career because of unbelief. Later evidence abounds. At the age of fifteen, by his own account, he had horrified his mother with the question: "Did God Almighty come down and make wheelbarrows in a shop?"[1] Of his college life he told: "I studied the evidences of Christianity for several years, with the greatest desire to be convinced, but in vain. I read Gibbon, and then first clearly saw that Christianity was not true. Then came the most trying time of my life."[2] Goethe, he claimed, led him to peace; but philosophic peace he never attained. "He was contemptuous to those who held to Christian dogmas; he was angry with those who gave them up; he was furious with those who attacked them. If equanimity be the mark of a Philosopher, he was of all great-minded men the least of a Philosopher."[3] To all freethinking work, scholarly or other, he was hostile with the hostility of a man consciously in a false position. Strauss's *Leben Jesu* he pronounced, quite late in life, "a revolutionary and ill-advised enterprise, setting forth in words what all wise men had in their minds for fifty years past, and thought it fittest to hold their peace about."[4] He was, in fact, so false to his own doctrine of veracity as to disparage all who spoke out; while privately agreeing with Mill as to the need for speaking out.[5] Even Mill did so only partially in his lifetime, as in his address to the St. Andrews students (1867), when, "in the reception given to the Address, he was most struck by the vociferous applause of the divinity students at the freethought passage."[6] In the first half of the century such displays of courage were rare indeed. Only

[1] *William Allingham: A Diary*, 1907, p. 253. Cp. p. 268.
[2] *Id.* p. 232.
[3] Allingham, as cited, p. 254.
[4] *Id.* p. 211. Carlyle said the same thing to Moncure Conway.
[5] Cp. Prof. Bain's *J. S. Mill*, pp. 157, 191; Froude's *London Life of Carlyle*, i, 458.
[6] Bain, p. 128.

after the death of Romilly was it tacitly avowed, by the publication of a deistic prayer found among his papers, that he had had no belief in revelation.[1] Much later in the century, HARRIET MARTINEAU, for openly avowing her unbelief, incurred the angry public censure of her own brother.

Despite his anxious caution, Carlyle's writing conveyed to susceptible readers a non-Christian view of things. We know from a posthumous writing of Mr. Froude's that, when that writer had gone through the university and taken holy orders without ever having had a single doubt as to his creed, Carlyle's books "taught him that the religion in which he had been reared was but one of many dresses in which spiritual truth had arrayed itself, and that the creed was not literally true so far as it was a narrative of facts."[2] It was presumably from the *Sartor Resartus* and some of the Essays, such as that on Voltaire—perhaps, also, negatively from the general absence of Christian sentiment in Carlyle's works—that such lessons were learned; and though it is certain that many non-zealous Christians saw no harm in Carlyle, there is reason to believe that for multitudes of readers he had the same awakening virtue. It need hardly be said that his friend Emerson exercised it in no less degree. Mr. Froude was remarkable in his youth for his surrender of the clerical profession, in the teeth of a bitter opposition from his family, and further for his publication of a freethinking romance, *The Nemesis of Faith* (1849); but he went far to conciliate Anglican orthodoxy by his *History*. The romance had a temporary vogue rather above its artistic merits as a result of being publicly burned by the authorities of Exeter College, Oxford, of which he was a Fellow.[3]

7. This attitude of orthodoxy, threatening ostracism to any avowed freethinker who had a position to lose, must be kept in mind in estimating the English evolution of that time. A professed man of science could write in 1838 that "the new mode of interpreting the Scriptures which has sprung up in Germany is the darkest cloud which lowers upon the horizon of that country.....The Germans have been conducted by some of their teachers to the borders of a precipice, one leap from which will plunge them into deism." He added that in various parts of Europe "the heaviest calamity impending over the whole fabric of society in our time is the lengthening stride of bold skepticism in some parts, and the more stealthy onwards-creeping

[1] See Brougham's letters in the *Correspondence of Macvey Napier*, 1879, pp. 333-37. Brougham is deeply indignant, not at the fact, but at the indiscreet revelation of it—as also at the similar revelation concerning Pitt (p. 334).
[2] *My Relations with Carlyle*, 1903, p. 2.
[3] *Morning Post*, March 9, 1849.

step of critical cavil in others."[1] Such declamation could terrorize the timid and constrain the prudent in such a society as that of early Victorian England. The prevailing note is struck in Macaulay's description of Charles Blount as "an infidel, and the head of a small school of infidels who were troubled with a morbid desire to make converts."[2] All the while, Macaulay was himself privately "infidel",[3] but he cleared his conscience by thus denouncing those who had the courage of their opinions. In this simple fashion some of the sanest writers in history were complacently put below the level of the commonplace dissemblers who aspersed them; and the average educated man saw no baseness in the procedure.

The opinion deliberately expressed in this connection by the late Professor Bain is worth noting:—

"It can at last be clearly seen what was the motive of Carlyle's perplexing style of composition. We now know what his opinions were when he began to write, and that to express them would have been fatal to his success; yet he was not a man to indulge in rank hypocrisy. He accordingly adopted a studied and ambiguous phraseology, which for long imposed upon the religious public, who put their own interpretation upon his mystical utterances, and gave him the benefit of any doubt. In the *Life of Sterling* he threw off the mask, but still was not taken at his word. Had there been a perfect tolerance of all opinions, he would have begun as he ended; and his strain of composition, while still mystical and high-flown, would never have been identified with our national orthodoxy.

"I have grave doubts as to whether we possess Macaulay's real opinions on religion. His way of dealing with the subject is so like the hedging of an unbeliever that, without some good assurance to the contrary, I must include him also among the imitators of Aristotle's 'caution.'.....

"When Sir Charles Lyell brought out his *Antiquity of Man*, he too was cautious. Knowing the dangers of his footing, he abstained from giving an estimate of the extension of time required by the evidences of human remains. Society in London, however, would not put up with this reticence, and he had to disclose at dinner parties what he had withheld from the public—namely, that in his opinion the duration of man could not be less than 50,000 years" (*Practical Essays*, p. 274.)

[1] *Germany*, by Bisset Hawkins, M.D., F.R.S., F.R.C.P., Inspector of Prisons, late Professor at King's College, etc., 1838, p. 171. [2] *History*, ch. xix. Student's ed. ii. 411.

[3] Sometimes he gives a clue; and we find Brougham privately denouncing him for his remark (Essay on *Ranke's History of the Popes*, 6th par.) that to try "without the help of revelation to prove the immortality of man" is vain. "It is next thing to preaching atheism," shouts Brougham (Letter of October 20, 1840, in *Correspondence of Macvey Napier*, p. 333), who at the same time hotly insisted that Cuvier had made an advance in Natural Theology by proving that there must have been *one* divine interposition after the creation of the world—to create species. (*Id.* p. 337.)

8. Thus for a whole generation honest and narrow-minded believers were trained to suppose that their views were triumphant over all attacks,[1] and to see in "infidelity" a disease of an ill-informed past; and as the Church had really gained in conventional culture as well as in wealth and prestige in the period of reaction, the power of mere convention to override ideas was still enormous. But through the whole stress of reaction and conservatism, even apart from the positive criticism of creed which from time to time forced its head up, there is a visible play of a new spirit in the most notable of the serious writing of the time. Carlyle undermined orthodoxy even in his asseveration of unreasoned theism; Emerson disturbs it alike when he acclaims mystics and welcomes evolutionary science; and the whole inspiration of Mill's *Logic* no less than of his *Liberty* is something alien to the principle of authority. Of Ruskin, again, the same may be asserted in respect of his many searching thrusts at clerical and lay practice, his defence of Colenso, and the obvious disappearance from his later books of the evangelical orthodoxy of the earlier.[2] Thus the most celebrated writers of serious English prose in the latter half of the century were in a measure associated with the spirit of critical thought on matters religious. In a much stronger degree the same thing may be predicated finally of the writer who in the field of English *belles lettres*, apart from fiction, came nearest them in fame and influence. Matthew Arnold, passing insensibly from the English attitude of academic orthodoxy to that of the humanist for whom Christ is but an admirable teacher and God a "Something not ourselves which makes for righteousness," became for the England of his later years the favourite pilot across the bar between supernaturalism and naturalism. Only in England, perhaps, could his curious gospel of church-going and Bible-reading atheism have prospered, but there it prospered exceedingly. Alike as poet and as essayist, even when essaying to disparage Colenso or to confute the Germans where they jostled his predilection for the Fourth Gospel, he was a disintegrator of tradition, and, in his dogmatic way, a dissolver of dogmatism. When, therefore, beside the four names just mentioned the British public placed those of the philosophers Spencer, Lewes, and Mill, and the scientists Darwin, Huxley, Clifford, and Tyndall, they could not but recognize that the mind of the age was divorced from the nominal faith of the Church.

[1] In 1830, for instance, we find a Scottish episcopal D.D. writing that "Infidelity has had its day; it, depend upon it, will never be revived—NO MAN OF GENIUS WILL EVER WRITE ANOTHER WORD IN ITS SUPPORT." Morehead, *Dialogues on Natural and Revealed Religion*, p. 266.

[2] Cp. the author's *Modern Humanists*, pp. 189–94.

9. In English fiction, the beginning of the end of genuine faith was apparent to the prophetic eyes of Wilberforce and Robert Hall, of whom the former lamented the total absence of Christian sentiment from nearly all the successful fiction even of his day;[1] and the latter avowed the pain with which he noted that Miss Edgeworth, whom he admired for her style and art, put absolutely no religion in her books,[2] while Hannah More, whose principles were so excellent, had such a vicious style. With Thackeray and Dickens, indeed, serious fiction might seem to be on the side of faith, both being liberally orthodox, though neither ventured on religious romance; but with GEORGE ELIOT the balance began to lean the other way, her sympathetic treatment of religious types counting for little as against her known rationalism. At the end of the century almost all of the leading writers of the higher fiction were known to be either rationalists or simple theists; and against the heavy metal of Mr. Meredith, Mr. Conrad, Mr. Hardy, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Moore (whose sympathetic handling of religious motives suggests the influence of Huysmans), and the didactic-deistic Mrs. Humphry-Ward, orthodoxy can but claim artists of the third or lower grades. The championship of some of the latter may be regarded as the last humiliation of faith.

In 1905 there was current a vulgar novel entitled *When it was Dark*, wherein was said to be drawn a blood-curdling picture of what would happen in the event of a general surrender of Christian faith. Despite some episcopal approbation, the book excited much disgust among the more enlightened clergy. The preface to Miss Marie Corelli's *Mighty Atom* may serve to convey to the many readers who cannot peruse the works of that lady an idea of the temper in which she vindicates her faith. Another popular novelist of a low artistic grade, the late Mr. Seton-Merriman, has avowed his religious soundness in a romance with a Russian plot, entitled *The Sowers*. Referring to the impressions produced by great scenes of Nature, he writes: "These places and these times are good for convalescent atheists and such as pose as unbelievers—the cheapest form of notoriety" (p. 168). The novelist's own Christian ethic is thus indicated: "He had Jewish blood in his veins, which..... carried with it the usual tendency to cringe. It is in the blood; it is part of that which the people who stood without Pilate's

[1] *Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System* (1797), 8th ed. p. 368. Wilberforce points with chagrin to the superiority of Mohammedan writers in these matters.

[2] "In point of tendency I should class her books among the most irreligious I ever read," delineating good characters in every aspect, "and all this without the remotest allusion to Christianity, the only true religion." Cited in O. Gregory's *Brief Memoir of Robert Hall*, 1833, p. 242. The context tells how Miss Edgeworth avowed that she had not thought religion necessary in books meant for the upper classes.

palace took upon themselves and their children" (p. 59). But the enormous mass of modern novels includes some tolerable pleas for faith, as well as many manifestoes of agnosticism. One of the works of the late "Edna Lyall," *We Two*, was notable as the expression of the sympathy of a devout, generous, and amiable Christian lady with the personality and career of Mr. Bradlaugh.

10. Among the most artistically gifted of the English story-writers and essayists of the last generation of the century was RICHARD JEFFERIES (d. 1887), who in *The Story of My Heart* (1883) has told how "the last traces and relics of superstitions acquired compulsorily in childhood" finally passed away from his mind, leaving him a Naturalist in every sense of the word. In the *Eulogy of Richard Jefferies* published by Sir Walter Besant in 1888 it is asserted that on his deathbed Jefferies returned to his faith, and "died listening with faith and love to the words contained in the Old Book." A popular account of this "conversion" accordingly became current, and was employed to the usual purpose. As has been shown by a careful student, and as was admitted on inquiry by Sir Walter Besant, there had been no conversion whatever, Jefferies having simply listened to his wife's reading without hinting at any change in his convictions.[1] Despite his biographer's express admission of his error, Christian journals, such as the *Spectator*, have burked the facts; one, the *Christian*, has piously charged dishonesty on the writer who brought them to light; and a third, the Salvationist *War Cry*, has pronounced his action "the basest form of chicanery and falsehood."[2] The episode is worth noting as indicating the qualities which still attach to orthodox propaganda.

11. Though Shelley was anathema to English Christians in his own day, his fame and standing steadily rose in the generations after his death. Nor has the balance of English poetry ever reverted to the side of faith. Even Tennyson, who more than once struck at rationalism below the belt, is in his own despite the poet of doubt as much as of credence, however he might wilfully attune himself to the key of faith; and the unparalleled optimism of Browning evolved a form of Christianity sufficiently alien to the historic creed.[3] In CLOUGH and MATTHEW ARNOLD, again, we have the positive record of surrendered faith. Alongside of Arnold, SWINBURNE put

[1] Art. "The Faith of Richard Jefferies," by H. S. Salt, in *Westminster Review*, August, 1905, rep. as pamphlet by the R. P. A., 1906.

[2] The writer of these scurrilities is Mr. Bramwell Booth, *War Cry*, May 27, 1905.

[3] Cp. Mrs. Sutherland Orr's article on "The Religious Opinions of Robert Browning" in the *Contemporary Review*, December, 1891, p. 878; and the present writer's *Tennyson and Browning as Teachers*, 1903.

into his verse the freethinking temper that Leconte de Lisle reserved for prose; and the ill-starred but finely gifted JAMES THOMSON ("B.V.") was no less definitely though despairingly an unbeliever. Among our later poets, finally, the balance is pretty much the same. Mr. Watson has declared in worthily noble diction for a high agnosticism, and the late John Davidson defied orthodox ethics in the name of his very antinomian theology;[1] while on the side of the regulation religion—since Mr. Yeats is but a stray Druid—can be cited at best the regimental psalmody of Mr. Kipling, lyrist of trumpet and drum; the stained-glass Mariolatries of the late Francis Thompson; the declamatory orthodoxy of Mr. Noyes; and the Godism of W. E. Henley, whereat the prosaic godly look askance.

12. Of the imaginative literature of the United States, as of that of England, the same generalization broadly holds good. The incomparable Hawthorne, whatever his psychological sympathy with the Puritan past, wrought inevitably by his art for the loosening of its intellectual hold; POE, though he did not venture till his days of downfall to write his *Eureka*, thereby proves himself an entirely non-Christian theist; and EMERSON'S poetry, no less than his prose, constantly expresses his pantheism; while his gifted disciple THOREAU, in some ways a more stringent thinker than his master, was either a pantheist or a Lucretian theist, standing aloof from all churches.[2] The economic conditions of American life have till recently been unfavourable to the higher literature, as apart from fiction; but the unique figure of WALT WHITMAN stands for a thoroughly naturalistic view of life;[3] Mr. HOWELLS appears to be at most a theist; Mr. HENRY JAMES has not even exhibited the bias of his gifted brother to the theism of their no less gifted father; and some of the most esteemed men of letters since the Civil War, as Dr. WENDELL HOLMES and Colonel WENTWORTH HIGGINSON, have been avowedly on the side of rationalism, or, as the term goes in the States, "liberalism." Though the tone of ordinary conversation is more often reminiscent of religion in the United States than in England, the novel and the newspaper have been perhaps more thoroughly secularized there than here; and in the public honour

[1] Apropos of his *Theatrocrat*, which he pronounced "the most profound and original of English books," Mr. Davidson in a newspaper article proclaimed himself on socio-political grounds an anti-Christian. "I take the first resolute step out of Christendom," was his claim (*Daily Chronicle*, December 20, 1905).

[2] See *Talks with Emerson*, by C. J. Woodbury, 1890, pp. 93–94.

[3] It was in his old age that Whitman tended most to "theize" Nature. In conversation with Dr. Moncure Conway, he once used the expression that "the spectacle of a mouse is enough to stagger a sextillion of infidels." Dr. Conway replied: "And the sight of the cat playing with the mouse is enough to set them on their feet again"; whereat Whitman tolerantly smiled.

done to so thorough a rationalist as the late Dr. Moncure Conway at the hands of his *alma mater*, the Dickinson College, West Virginia, may be seen the proof that the official orthodoxy of his youth has disappeared from the region of his birth.

13. Of the vast modern output of *belles lettres* in continental Europe, finally, a similar account is to be given. The supreme poet of modern Italy, LEOPARDI, is one of the most definitely rationalistic as well as one of the greatest philosophic poets in literature; CARDUCCI, the greatest of his successors, was explicitly anti-Christian; and despite all the claims of the Catholic socialists, there is little modern Catholic literature in Italy of any European value. One of the most distinguished of modern Italian scholars, Professor A. de GUBERNATIS, has in his *Letture sopra la mitologia vedica* (1874) explicitly treated the Christian legend as a myth. In Germany we have seen Goethe and Schiller distinctly counting for naturalism; and of Jean Paul Richter (1763–1825) an orthodox historian declares that his "religion was a chaotic fermenting of the mind, out of which now deism, then Christianity, then a new religion, seems to come forth."[1] The naturalistic line is found to be continued in HEINRICH VON KLEIST, the unhappy but masterly dramatist of *Der Zerbrochene Krug*, one of the truest geniuses of his time; and above all in HEINE, whose characteristic profession of reconciling himself on his deathbed with the deity he imaged as "the Aristophanes of heaven"[2] serves so scantily to console the orthodox lovers of his matchless song. His criticism of Kant and Fichte is a sufficient clue to his serious convictions; and that "God is all that there is"[3] is the sufficient expression of his pantheism. The whole purport of his brilliant sketch of the *History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany* (1834; 2nd ed. 1852) is a propaganda of the very spirit of freethinking, which constitutes for Germany at once a literary classic and a manifesto of rationalism. As he himself said of the return of the aged Schelling to Catholicism, we may say of Heine, that a deathbed reversion to early beliefs is a pathological phenomenon.

> The use latterly made of Heine's deathbed re-conversion by orthodoxy in England is characteristic. The late letters and conversations in which he said edifying things of God and the Bible are cited for readers who know nothing of the context, and almost as little of the speaker. He had similarly praised the Bible in 1830 (Letter of July, in B. iii of his volume on

[1] Kahnis, *Internal Hist. of Ger. Protestantism*, Eng. tr. 1856, p. 78.
[2] *Geständnisse*, end (*Werke*, ed. 1876, iv, 59).
[3] *Zur Gesch. der Relig. und Philos.* in *Werke*, ed. cited, iii, 80.

Börne—*Werke*, vii, 160). To the reader of the whole it is clear that, while Heine's verbal renunciation of his former pantheism, and his characterization of the pantheistic position as a "timid atheism," might have been made independently of his physical prostration, his profession of the theism at which he had formerly scoffed is only momentarily serious, even at a time when such a reversion would have been in no way surprising. His return to and praise of the Bible, the book of his childhood, during years of extreme suffering and utter helplessness, was in the ordinary way of physiological reaction. But inasmuch as his thinking faculty was never extinguished by his tortures, he chronically indicated that his religious talk was a half-conscious indulgence of the overstrained emotional nature, and substantially an exercise of his poetic feeling—always as large a part of his psychosis as his reasoning faculty. Even in deathbed profession he was neither a Jew nor a Christian, his language being that of a deism "scarcely distinguishable in any essential element from that of Voltaire or Diderot" (Strodtmann, *Heine's Leben und Werke*, 2te Aufl. ii, 386). "My religious convictions and views," he writes in the preface to the late *Romancero*, "remain free of all churchism.....I have abjured nothing, not even my old heathen Gods, from whom I have parted in love and friendship." In his will he peremptorily forbade any clerical procedure at his funeral; and his feeling on that side is revealed in his sad jests to his friend Meissner in 1850. "If I could only go out on crutches!" he exclaimed; adding: "Do you know where I should go? Straight to church." On his friends expressing disbelief, he went on: "Certainly, to church! Where should a man go on crutches? Naturally, if I could walk without crutches, I should go to the laughing boulevards or the Jardin Mabille." The story is told in England *without* the conclusion, as a piece of "Christian Evidence."

But even as to his theism Heine was never more than wilfully and poetically a believer. In 1849 we find him jesting about "God" and "the Gods," declaring he will not offend the *lieber Gott*, whose vultures he knows and respects. "Opium is also a religion," he writes in 1850. "Christianity is useless for the healthy.....for the sick it is a very good religion." "If the German people in their need accept the King of Prussia, why should not I accept the personal God?" And in speaking of the postscript to the *Romancero* he writes in 1851: "Alas, I had neither time nor mood to say there what I wanted—namely, that I die as a Poet, who needs neither religion nor philosophy, and has nothing to do with either. The Poet understands very well the symbolic idiom of Religion, and the abstract jargon of Philosophy; but neither the religious gentry nor those of philosophy will ever understand the Poet." A few weeks before his

death he signs a New Year letter, "Nebuchadnezzar II, formerly Prussian Atheist, now Lotosflower-adorer." At this time he was taking immense doses of morphia to make his tortures bearable. A few hours before his death a querying pietist got from him the answer: "God will pardon me; it is his business." The *Geständnisse*, written in 1854, ends in absolute irony; and his alleged grounds for giving up atheism, sometimes quoted seriously, are purely humorous (*Werke*, iv, 33). If it be in any sense true, as he tells in the preface to the *Romancero*, that "the high clerisy of atheism pronounced its anathema" over him—that is to say, that former friends denounced him as a weak turncoat—it needed only the publication of his Life and Letters to enable freethinkers to take an entirely sympathetic view of his case, which may serve as a supreme example of "the martyrdom of man." On the whole question see Strodtmann, as cited, ii, 372 *sq.*, and the *Geständnisse*, which should be compared with the earlier written fragments of *Briefe über Deutschland* (*Werke*, iii, 110), where there are some significant variations in statements of fact.

Since Heine, German *belles lettres* has not been a first-rate influence in Europe; but some of the leading novelists, as AUERBACH and HEYSE, are well known to have shared in the rational philosophy of their age; and the Christianity of Wagner, whose precarious support to the cause of faith has been welcomed chiefly by its heteroclite adherents, counts for nothing in the critical scale.[1]

14. But perhaps the most considerable evidence, in *belles lettres*, of the predominance of rationalism in modern Europe is to be found in the literary history of the Scandinavian States and Russia. The Russian development indeed had gone far ere the modern Scandinavian literatures had well begun. Already in the first quarter of the century the poet Poushkine was an avowed heretic; and Gogol even let his art suffer from his preoccupations with the new humanitarian ideas; while the critic BIÉLINSKY, classed by Tourguénief as the Lessing of Russia,[2] was pronouncedly rationalistic,[3] as was his contemporary the critic GRANOVSKY,[4] reputed the finest Russian stylist of his day. At this period *belles lettres* stood for every form of intellectual influence in Russia,[5] and all educated thought was moulded by it. The most perfect artistic result is the fiction of the freethinker TOURGUÉNIEF,[6] the Sophocles

[1] See Ernest Newman's *Study of Wagner*, 1899, p. 390, *note*, as to the vagueness of Wagnerians on the subject.
[2] Tikhomirov, *La Russie*, 2e édit. p. 343.
[3] See Comte de Vogüé's *Le roman russe*, p. 218, as to his propaganda of atheism.
[4] Arnaudo, *Le Nihilisme et les Nihilistes*, French tr. 50. [5] Tikhomirov, p. 344.
[6] "Il [Tourguénief] était libre-penseur, et détestât l'apparat religieux d'une manière toute particulière." I. Pavlovsky, *Souvenirs sur Tourguénief*, 1887, p. 242.

of the modern novel. His two great contemporaries, Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy, count indeed for supernaturalism; but the truly wonderful genius of the former was something apart from his philosophy, which was merely childlike; and the latter, the least masterly if the most strenuous artist of the three, made his religious converts in Russia chiefly among the uneducated, and was in any case sharply antagonistic to orthodox Christianity. It does not appear that the younger writer, Potapenko, a fine artist, is orthodox, despite his extremely sympathetic presentment of a superior priest; and the still younger Gorky is an absolute Naturalist.

15. In the Scandinavian States, again, there are hardly any exceptions to the freethinking tendency among the leading living men of letters. In the person of the abnormal religionist Sören Kierkegaard (1813–1855) a new force of criticism began to stir in Denmark. Setting out as a theologian, Kierkegaard gradually developed, always on quasi-religious lines, into a vehement assailant of conventional Christianity, somewhat in the spirit of Pascal, somewhat in that of Feuerbach, again in that of Ruskin; and in a temper recalling now a Berserker and now a Hebrew prophet. The general effect of his teaching may be gathered from the mass of the work of HENRIK IBSEN, who was his disciple, and in particular from Ibsen's *Brand*, of which the hero is partly modelled on Kierkegaard.[1] Ibsen, though his *Brand* was counted to him for righteousness by the Churches, showed himself a thorough-going naturalist in all his later work; BJÖRNSON was an active freethinker; the eminent Danish critic, GEORG BRANDES, early avowed himself to the same effect; and his brother, the dramatist, EDWARD BRANDES, was elected to the Danish Parliament in 1871 despite his declaration that he believed in neither the Christian nor the Jewish God. Most of the younger *littérateurs* of Norway and Sweden seem to be of the same cast of thought.

SECTION 4.—THE NATURAL SCIENCES

1. The power of intellectual habit and tradition had preserved among the majority of educated men, to the end of the eighteenth century, a notion of deity either slightly removed from that of the ancient Hebrews or ethically purified without being philosophically transformed, though the astronomy of Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton had immensely modified the Hebraic conception of the

[1] See the article "Un Précurseur d'Henrik Ibsen, Soeren Kierkegaard," in the *Revue de Paris*, July 1, 1901.

physical universe. We have seen that Newton did not really hold by the Christian scheme—he wrote, at times, in fact, as a pantheist—but some later astronomers seem to have done so. When, however, the great LAPLACE developed the nebular hypothesis, previously guessed at by Bruno and outlined by Kant, orthodox psychological habit was rudely shaken as regards the Biblical account of creation; and like every other previous advance in physical science this was denounced as atheistic[1]—which, as we know, it was, Laplace having declared in reply to Napoleon that he had no need of the God hypothesis. Confirmed in essentials by all subsequent science, Laplace's system widens immensely the gulf between modern cosmology and the historic theism of the Christian era; and the subsequent concrete developments of astronomy, giving as they do such an insistent and overwhelming impression of physical infinity, have made the "Christian hypothesis"[2] fantastic save for minds capable of enduring any strain on the sense of consistency. Paine had brought the difficulty vividly home to the common intelligence; and though the history of orthodoxy is a history of the success of institutions and majorities in imposing incongruous conformities, the perception of the incongruity on this side must have been a force of disintegration. The freethinking of the French astronomers of the Revolution period marks a decisive change; and as early as 1826 we find in a work on Jewish antiquities by a Scotch clergyman a very plain indication[3] of disbelief in the Hebrew story of the stopping of the sun and moon, or (alternatively) of the rotation of the earth. It is typical of the tenacity of religious delusion that a quarter of a century later this among other irrational credences was contended for by the Swiss theologian Gaussen,[4] and by the orthodox majority elsewhere, when for all scientifically trained men they had become untenable. And that the general growth of scientific thought was disintegrating among scientific men the old belief in miracles may be gathered from an article, remarkable in its day, which appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* of January, 1814 (No. 46), and was "universally attributed to Prof. Leslie,"[5] the distinguished physicist.

[1] Prof. A. D. White, *Hist. of the Warfare of Science with Theology*, 1896, i, 17, 22.

[2] The phrase is used by a French Protestant pastor. *La vérité chrétienne et la doute moderne* (Conférences), 1879, pp. 24–25.

[3] *Antiquities of the Jews*, by William Brown, D.D., Edinburgh, 1826, i, 121–22. Brown quotes "from a friend" a demonstration of the monstrous consequences of a stoppage of the earth's rotation.

[4] *Theopneustia: The Plenary Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures*, Eng. trans. Edinburgh, 1850, pp. 246–49. Gaussen elaborately argues that if eighteen minutes were allowed for the stoppage of the earth's rotation, no shock would occur. Finally, however, he argues that there may have been a mere refraction of the sun's rays—an old theory, already set forth by Brown.

[5] Dr. C. R. Edmonds, Introd. to rep. of Leland's *View of the Deistical Writers*, Tegg's ed. 1837, p. xxiii.

Reviewing the argument of Laplace's essay, *Sur les probabilités*, it substantially endorsed the thesis of Hume that miracles cannot be proved by any testimony.

Leslie's own case is one of the milestones marking the slow recovery of progress in Britain after the Revolution. His appointment to the chair of Mathematics, after Playfair, at Edinburgh University in 1805 was bitterly resisted by the orthodox on the score that he was a disbeliever in miracles and an "infidel" of the school of Hume, who had been his personal friend. Nevertheless he again succeeded Playfair in the chair of Physics in 1819, and was knighted in 1832. The invention of the hygrometer and the discovery of the relations of light and heat had begun to count for more in science than the profession of orthodoxy.

2. From France came likewise the impulse to a naturalistic handling of biology, long before the day of Darwin. The protagonist in this case was the physician P.-J.-G. CABANIS (1737–1808), the colleague of Laplace in the School of Sciences. Growing up in the generation of the Revolution, Cabanis had met, in the salon of Madame Helvétius, d'Holbach, Diderot, D'Alembert, Condorcet, Laplace, Condillac, Volney, Franklin, and Jefferson, and became the physician of Mirabeau. His treatise on the *Rapports du physique et du morale de l'homme* (1796–1802)[1] might be described as the systematic application to psychology of that "positive" method to which all the keenest thought of the eighteenth century had been tending, yet with much of the literary or rhetorical tone by which the French writers of that age had nearly all been characterized. For Cabanis, the psychology of Helvétius and Condillac had been hampered by their ignorance of physiology;[2] and he easily put aside the primary errors, such as the "equality of minds" and the entity of "the soul," which they took over from previous thinkers. His own work is on the whole the most searching and original handling of the main problems of psycho-physiology that had yet been achieved; and to this day its suggestiveness has not been exhausted.

But Cabanis, in his turn, made the mistake of Helvétius and Condillac. Not content with presenting the results of his study in the province in which he was relatively master, he undertook to reach ultimate truth in those of ethics and philosophy, in which he was not so. In the preface to the *Rapports* he lays down an

[1] The work consists of twelve "Mémoires" or treatises, six of which were read in 1796–1797 at the Institute. They appeared in book form in 1802.

[2] *Rapports*, Ier Mémoire, § ii, near end. (Éd. 1843, p. 73.) Cp. Préf. (pp. 46–47).

emphatically agnostic conviction as to final causes: "ignorance the most invincible," he declares, is all that is possible to man on that issue.[1] But not only does he in his main work freely and loosely generalize on the phenomena of history and overleap the ethical problem: he penned shortly before his death a *Lettre sur les causes premières*, addressed to Fauriel,[2] in which the aging intelligence is seen reverting to à priori processes, and concluding in favour of a "sort of stoic pantheism"[3] with a balance towards normal theism and a belief in immortality. The final doctrine did not in the least affect the argument of the earlier, which was simply one of positive science; but the clerical world, which had in the usual fashion denounced the scientific doctrine, not on the score of any attack by Cabanis upon religion, but because of its incompatibility with the notion of the soul, naturally made much of the mystical,[4] and accorded its framer authority from that moment.

As for the conception of "vitalism" put forward in the Letter to Fauriel by way of explanation of the phenomena of life, it is but a reversion to the earlier doctrine of Stahl, of which Cabanis had been a partisan in his youth.[5] The fact remains that he gave an enduring impulse to positive science,[6] his own final vacillation failing to arrest the employment of the method he had inherited and improved. Most people know him solely through one misquotation, the famous phrase that "the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile." This is not only an imperfect statement of his doctrine: it suppresses precisely the idea by which Cabanis differentiates from pure "sensationalism." What he taught was that "*impressions, reaching the brain, set it in activity*, as aliments reaching the stomach excite it to a more abundant secretion of gastric juice.....The function proper to the first is to perceive particular impressions, to attach to them signs, to combine different impressions, to separate them, to draw from them judgments and determinations, as the function of the second is to act on nutritive substances," etc.[7] It is after this statement of the known processus, and after pointing out that there is as much of pure inference in the one case as in the other, that he concludes: "The brain in a manner digests impressions, and makes organically the secretion of thought"

[1] Ed. cited, p. 54. Cp. p. 207, *note*.
[2] Not published till 1824.
[3] Ueberweg, ii, 339.
[4] Cp. Luchaire, as cited, p. 36.
[5] Lange, *Gesch. des Materialismus*, ii, 134.
[6] "Since Cabanis, the referring back of mental functions to the nervous system has remained dominant in physiology, whatever individual physiologists may have thought about final causes" (Lange, ii, 70). Compare the tribute of Cabanis's orthodox editor Cerise (ed. 1843, Introd. pp. xlii-iii).
[7] *Rapports*, IIe Mémoire, near end. (Ed. cited, p. 122.)

and this conclusion, he points out, disposes of the difficulty of those who "cannot conceive how judging, reasoning, imagining, can ever be anything else than feeling. The difficulty ceases when one recognizes, in these different operations, the action of the brain upon the impressions which are passed on to it." The doctrine is, in short, an elementary truth of psychological science, as distinguished from the pseudo-science of the Ego considered as an entity. To that pseudo-science Cabanis gave a vital wound; and his derided formula is for true science to-day almost a truism. The attacks made upon his doctrine in the next generation only served to emphasize anew the eternal dilemma of theism. On the one hand his final "vitalism" was repugnant to those who, on traditional lines, insisted upon a distinction between "soul" and "vital force"; on the other hand, those who sought to make a philosophic case for theism against him made the usual plunge into pantheism, and were reproached accordingly by the orthodox.[1] All that remained was the indisputable "positive" gain.

3. In England the influence of the French stimulus in physiology was seen even more clearly than that of the great generalization of Laplace. Professor William Lawrence (1783–1867), the physiologist, published in 1816 an *Introduction to Comparative Anatomy and Physiology*, containing some remarks on the nature of life, which elicited from the then famous Dr. Abernethy a foul attack in his *Physiological Lectures* delivered before the College of Surgeons. Lawrence was charged with belonging to the party of French physiological skeptics whose aim was to "loosen those restraints on which the welfare of mankind depends."[2] In the introductory lecture of his course of 1817 before the College of Physicians, Lawrence severely retaliated, repudiating the general charge, but reasserting that the dependence of life on organization is as clear as the derivation of daylight from the sun. The war was adroitly carried at once into the enemy's territory in the declaration that "The profound, the virtuous, and fervently pious Pascal acknowledged, what all sound theologians maintain, that the immortality of the soul,

[1] See the already cited introduction of Cerise, who solved the problem religiously by positing "a force which executes the plans of God without our knowledge or intervention" (p. xix). He goes on to lament the pantheism of Dr. Dubois (whose *Examen des doctrines de Cabanis, Gall, et Broussais* (1842) was put forward as a vindication of the "spiritual" principle), and of the German school of physiology represented by Oken and Burdach.

[2] Lawrence's *Lectures on Physiology, Zoology, and the Natural History of Man*, 8th ed. 1840, pp. 1–3. The aspersion of Abernethy is typical of the orthodox malignity of the time. Cabanis in his preface had expressly contended for the all-importance of morals. The orthodox Dr. Cerise, who edited his book in 1843, while acknowledging the high character of Cabanis, thought fit to speak of "the materialists" as "interested in abasing man" (introd. p. xxi). On the score of fear of demoralization, the champions of "spirit" themselves exhibited the maximum of baseness.

the great truths of religion, and the fundamental principles of morals cannot be demonstrably proved by mere reason; and that revelation alone is capable of dissipating the uncertainties which perplex those who inquire too curiously into the sources of these important principles. All will acknowledge that, as no other remedy can be so perfect and satisfactory as this, no other can be necessary, if we resort to this with firm faith."[1] The value of this pronouncement is indicated later in the same volume by subacid allusions to "those who regard the Hebrew Scriptures as writings composed with the assistance of divine inspiration," and who receive Genesis "as a narrative of actual events." Indicating various "grounds of doubt respecting inspiration," the lecturer adds that the stories of the naming of the animals and their collection in the ark, "if we are to understand them as applied to the living inhabitants of the whole world, are zoologically impossible."[2] On the principle then governing such matters Lawrence was in 1822, on the score of his heresies, refused copyright in his lectures, which were accordingly reprinted many times in a cheap stereotyped edition, and thus widely diffused.[3]

This hardy attack was reinforced in 1819 by the publication of Sir T. C. Morgan's *Sketches of the Philosophy of Life*, wherein the physiological materialism of Cabanis is quietly but firmly developed, and a typical sentence of his figures as a motto on the title-page. The method is strictly naturalistic, alike on the medical and on the philosophic side; and "vitalism" is argued down as explicitly as is anthropomorphism.[4] As a whole the book tells notably of the stimulus of recent French thought upon English.

4. A more general effect, however, was probably wrought by the science of geology, which in a stable and tested form belongs to the nineteenth century. Of its theoretic founders in the eighteenth century, Werner and Dr. JAMES HUTTON (1726–1797), the latter and more important[5] is known from his *Investigation of the Principles of Knowledge* (1794) to have been consciously a freethinker on more grounds than that of his naturalistic science; and his *Theory of the World* (1795) was duly denounced as atheistic.[6] Whereas the physical infinity of the universe almost forced the orthodox to concede a vast cosmic process of some kind as preceding the shaping

[1] Lawrence's *Lectures*, p. 9, *note*.

[2] *Id.* pp. 168–69.

[3] Yet Lawrence was created a baronet two months before his death. So much progress had been made in half a century.

[4] Work cited, pp. 355 *sq.*, 375 *sq.* The tone is at times expressive of a similar attitude towards historical religion—*e.g.*: "Human testimony is of so little value.....that it cannot be received with sufficient caution. To doubt is the beginning of wisdom." *Id.* p. 269.

[5] Cp. Whewell, *Hist. of the Inductive Sciences*, 3rd ed. iii, 505.

[6] White, as cited, i, 222–23, gives a selection of the language in general use among theologians on the subject.

of the earth and solar system, the formation of these within six days was one of the plainest assertions in the sacred books; and every system of geology excluded such a conception. As the evidence accumulated, in the hands of men mostly content to deprecate religious opposition,[1] there was duly evolved the quaint compromise of the doctrine that the Biblical six "days" meant six ages—a fantasy still cherished in the pulpit. On the ground of that absurdity, nevertheless, there gradually grew up a new conception of the antiquity of the earth. Thus a popular work on geology such as *The Ancient World*, by Prof. Ansted (1847), could begin with the proposition that "long before the human race had been introduced on the earth this world of ours existed as the habitation of living things different from those now inhabiting its surface." Even the thesis of "six ages," and others of the same order, drew upon their supporters angry charges of "infidelity." Hugh Miller, whose natural gifts for geological research were chronically turned to confusion by his orthodox bias, was repeatedly so assailed, when in point of fact he was perpetually tampering with the facts to salve the Scriptures.[2] Of all the inductive sciences geology had been most retarded by the Christian canonization of error.[3] Even the plain fact that what is dry land had once been sea was obstinately distorted through centuries, though Ovid[4] had put the observations of Pythagoras in the way of all scholars; and though Leonardo da Vinci had insisted on the visible evidence; nay, deistic habit could keep even Voltaire, as we saw, preposterously incredulous on the subject. When the scientific truth began to force its way in the teeth of such authorities as Cuvier, who stood for the "Mosaic" doctrine, the effect was proportionately marked; and whether or not the suicide of Miller (1856) was in any way due to despair on perception of the collapse of his reconciliation of geology with Genesis,[5] the scientific demonstration made an end of revelationism for many. What helped most to save orthodoxy from humiliation on the scientific side was the attitude of men like Professor Baden

[1] The early policy of the Geological Society of London (1807), which professed to seek for facts and to disclaim theories as premature (cp. Whewell, iii, 428; Buckle, iii, 392), was at least as much socially as scientifically prudential.

[2] See the excellent monograph of W. M. Mackenzie, *Hugh Miller: A Critical Study*, 1905, ch. vi; and cp. Spencer's essay on *Illogical Geology—Essays*, vol. i; and Baden Powell's *Christianity without Judaism*, 1857, p. 254 *sq.* Miller's friend Dick, the Thurso naturalist, being a freethinker, escaped such error. (Mackenzie, pp. 161-64.)

[3] Cp. the details given by Whewell, iii, 406-408, 411-13, 506-507, as to early theories of a sound order, all of which came to nothing. Steno, a Dane resident in Italy in the seventeenth century, had reached non-Scriptural and just views on several points. Cp. White, *Hist. of the Warfare of Science with Theology*, i, 215. Leonardo da Vinci and Frascatorio had reached them still earlier. Above, vol. i, p. 371.

[4] *Metamorphoses*, lib. xv.

[5] He had just completed a work on the subject at his death. Cp. Mackenzie, *Hugh Miller*, as cited, pp. 134-35, 146-47.

Powell, whose scientific knowledge and habit of mind moved him to attack the Judaism of the Bibliolaters in the name of Christianity, and in the name of truth to declare that "nothing in geology bears the smallest semblance to any part of the Mosaic cosmogony, torture the interpretation to what extent we may."[1] In 1857 this was very bold language.

5. Still more rousing, finally, was the effect of the science of zoology, as placed upon a broad scientific foundation by CHARLES DARWIN. Here again steps had been taken in previous generations on the right path, without any general movement on the part of scientific and educated men. Darwin's own grandfather, ERASMUS DARWIN, had in his *Zoonomia* (1794) anticipated many of the positions of the French LAMARCK, who in 1801 began developing the views he fully elaborated in 1815, as to the descendance of all existing species from earlier forms.[2] As early as 1795 GEOFFROY SAINT-HILAIRE had begun to suspect that all species are variants on a primordial form of life; and at the same time (1794–95) Goethe in Germany had reached similar convictions.[3] That views thus reached almost simultaneously in Germany, England, and France, at the time of the French Revolution, should have to wait for two generations before even meeting the full stress of battle, must be put down as one of the results of the general reaction. Saint-Hilaire, publishing his views in 1828, was officially overborne by the Cuvier school in France. In England, indeed, so late as 1855, we find Sir David Brewster denouncing the Nebular Hypothesis: "that dull and dangerous heresy of the age.....An omnipotent arm was required to give the planets their position and motion in space, and a presiding intelligence to assign to them the different functions they had to perform."[4] And Murchison the geologist was no less emphatic against Darwinism, which he rejected till his dying day (1871).

6. Other anticipations of Darwin's doctrine in England and elsewhere came practically to nothing,[5] as regarded the general opinion, until ROBERT CHAMBERS in 1844 published anonymously his *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*, a work which found a wide audience, incurring bitter hostility not only from the clergy but from some specialists who, like Huxley, were later to take the

[1] *Christianity and Judaism*, pp. 256–57.
[2] See Charles Darwin's *Historical Sketch* prefixed to the *Origin of Species*.
[3] Meding, as cited by Darwin, 6th ed. i, p. xv. Goethe seems to have had his general impulse from Kielmeyer, who also taught Cuvier. Virchow, *Göthe als Naturforscher*, 1861, Beilage x.
[4] *Memoirs of Newton*, i, 131. Cp. *More Worlds than One*, 1854, pp. vi, 226.
[5] See Darwin's *Sketch*, as cited.

evolutionist view on Darwin's persuasion. Chambers it was that brought the issue within general knowledge; and he improved his position in successive editions. A hostile clerical reader, Whewell, admitted of him, in a letter to a less hostile member of his profession, that, "as to the degree of resemblance between the author and the French physiological atheists, he uses reverent phrases: theirs would not be tolerated in England"; adding: "You would be surprised to hear the contempt and abhorrence with which Owen and Sedgwick speak of the *Vestiges*."[1] Hugh Miller, himself accused of "infidelity" for his measure of inductive candour, held a similar tone towards men of greater intellectual rectitude, calling the liberalizing religionists of his day "vermin" and "reptiles,"[2] and classifying as "degraded and lost"[3] all who should accept the new doctrine of evolution, which, as put by Chambers, was then coming forward to evict his own delusions from the field of science. The young Max Müller, with the certitude born of an entire ignorance of physical science, declared in 1856 that the doctrine of a human evolution from lower types "can never be maintained again," and pronounced it an "unhallowed imputation."[4]

7. "Contempt and abhorrence" had in fact at all times constituted the common Christian temper towards every form of critical dissent from the body of received opinion; and only since the contempt, doubled with criticism, began to be in a large degree retorted on the bigots by instructed men has a better spirit prevailed. Such a reaction was greatly promoted by the establishment of the Darwinian theory. It was after the above-noted preparation, popular and academic, and after the theory of transmutation of species had been definitely pronounced erroneous by the omniscient Whewell,[5] that Darwin produced (1859) his irresistible arsenal of arguments and facts, the *Origin of Species*, expounding systematically the principle of Natural Selection, suggested to him by the economic philosophy of Malthus, and independently and contemporaneously arrived at by Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace. The outcry was enormous; and the Church, as always, arrayed itself violently against the new truth. Bishop Wilberforce pointed out in the *Quarterly Review* that "the principle of natural selection is absolutely incompatible with the word of God,"[6] which was perfectly true; and at a famous

[1] Letter of March 16, 1845, in *Life of Whewell*, by Mrs. Stair Douglas, 2nd ed. 1882, pp. 318–19. If this statement be true as to Owen, he shuffled badly in his correspondence with the author of the *Vestiges*. See the *Life of Sir Richard Owen*, 1894, i, 251.

[2] Mackenzie, *Hugh Miller*, p. 185.

[3] *Foot-Prints of the Creator*, end.

[4] *Oxford Essays*, 1856, p. 5

[5] *Hist. of the Inductive Sciences*, 3rd ed. iii, 479–83; *Life*, as above cited. Whewell is said to have refused to allow a copy of the *Origin of Species* to be placed in the Trinity College Library. White, i, 84.

[6] White, i, 70 *sq.*

meeting of the British Association in 1860 he so travestied the doctrine as to goad Huxley into a fierce declaration that he would rather be a descendant of an ape than of a man who (like the Bishop) plunged into questions with which he had no real acquaintance, only to obscure them and distract his hearers by appeals to religious prejudice.[1] The mass of the clergy kept up the warfare of ignorance; but the battle was practically won within twenty years. In France, Germany, and the United States leading theologians had made the same suicidal declarations, entitling all men to say that, if evolution proved to be true, Christianity was false. Professor Luthardt, of Leipzig, took up the same position as Bishop Wilberforce, declaring that "the whole superstructure of personal religion is built upon the doctrine of creation";[2] leading American theologians pronounced the new doctrine atheistic; and everywhere gross vituperation eked out the theological argument.[3]

8. Thus the idea of a specific creation of all forms of life by an originating deity—the conception which virtually united the deists and Christians of the eighteenth century against the atheists—was at length scientifically exploded. The principle of personal divine rule or providential intervention had now been philosophically excluded successively (1) from astronomy by the system of Newton; (2) from the science of earth-formation by the system of Laplace and the new geology; (3) from the science of living organisms by the new zoology. It only needed that the deistic conception should be further excluded from the human sciences—from anthropology, from the philosophy of history, and from ethics—to complete, at least in outline, the rationalization of modern thought. Not that the process was complete in detail even as regarded zoology. Despite the plain implications of the *Origin of Species*, the doctrine of the *Descent of Man* (1871) came on many as a shocking surprise and evoked a new fury of protest. The lacunæ in Darwin, further, had to be supplemented; and much speculative power has been spent on the task by HAECKEL, without thus far establishing complete agreement. But the desperate stand so long made on the score of the "missing link" seems to have been finally discredited in 1894; and the Judæo-Christian doctrine of special creation and

[1] Edward Clodd, *Thomas Henry Huxley*, 1902, pp. 19-20.
[2] Luthardt, *Fundamental Truths of Christianity*, Eng. tr. 1865, p. 74.
[3] See the many examples cited by White. As late as 1885 the Scottish clergyman Dr. Lee is quoted as calling the Darwinians "gospellers of the gutter," and charging on their doctrine "utter blasphemy against the divine and human character of our incarnate Lord" (White, i, 83). Carlyle is quoted as calling Darwin "an apostle of dirt-worship." His admirers appear to regard him as having made amends by admitting that Darwin was personally charming.

providential design appears, even in the imperfectly educated society of our day, to be already a lost cause.

As we have seen, however, it was not merely the clerical class that resisted the new truth: the men of science themselves were often disgracefully hostile; and that "class" continued to give a sufficiency of support to clericalism. If the study of the physical sciences be no guarantee for recognition of new truth in those sciences, still less is it a sure preparation for right judgment in matters of sociology, or, indeed, for a courageous attitude towards conventions. Spencer in his earlier works used the language of deism[1] at a time when Comte had discarded it. It takes a rare combination of intellectual power, moral courage, and official freedom to permit of such a directly rationalistic propaganda as was carried on by Professor CLIFFORD, or even such as has been accomplished by President ANDREW WHITE in America under the comparatively popular profession of deism. It was only in his leisured latter years that Huxley carried on a general conflict with orthodoxy. In middle age he frequently covered himself by attacks on professed freethinkers; and he did more than any other man of his time in England to conserve the Bible as a school manual by his politic panegyric of it in that aspect at a time when bolder rationalists were striving to get it excluded from the State schools.[2] Other men of science have furnished an abundance of support to orthodoxy by more or less vaguely religious pronouncements on the problem of the universe; so that Catholic and other obscurantist agencies are able to cite from them many quasi-scientific phrases[3]—taking care not to ask what bearing their language has on the dogmas of the Churches. Physicists who attempt to be more precise are rarely found to be orthodox; and the moral and social science of such writers is too often a species of charlatanism. But the whole tendency of natural science, which as such is necessarily alien to supernaturalism, makes for a rejection of the religious tradition; and the real leaders of science are found more and more openly alienated from the creed of faith. We know that Darwin, though the son and grandson of freethinkers, was brought up in ordinary orthodoxy by his mother, and "gave up common religious belief almost independently from his own reflections."[4] All over the

[1] *E.g.* the *Education*, small ed. pp. 41, 155.

[2] I am informed on good authority that in later life Huxley changed his views on the subject. He had abundant cause. As early as 1879 he is found complaining (pref. to Eng. tr. of Haeckel's *Freedom in Science and Teaching*, p. xvii) of the mass of "falsities at present foisted upon the young in the name of the Church."

[3] See a choice collection in the pamphlet *What Men of Science say about God and Religion*, by A. E. Proctor; Catholic Truth Society.

[4] *Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, ed. 1888, iii, 179.

world that has since been an increasingly common experience among scientific men.

Section 5.—The Sociological Sciences

1. A rationalistic treatment of human history had been explicit or implicit in the whole literature of Deism; and had been attempted with various degrees of success by Bodin, Vico, Montesquieu, Mandeville, Hume, Smith, Voltaire, Volney, and Condorcet, as well as by lesser men.[1] So clear had been the classic lead to naturalistic views of social growth in the *Politics* of Aristotle, and so strong the influence of the new naturalistic spirit, that it is seen even in the work of Goguet (1769), who sets out as biblically as Bossuet; while in Germany Herder and Kant framed really luminous generalizations; and a whole group of sociological writers rose up in the Scotland of the middle and latter parts of the century.[2] Here again there was reaction; but in France the orthodox Guizot did much to promote broader views than his own; Eusèbe Salverte in his essay *De la Civilisation* (1813) made a highly intelligent effort towards a general view; and Charles Comte in his *Traité de Législation* (1826) made a marked scientific advance on the suggestive work of Herder. As we have seen, the eclectic Jouffroy put human affairs in the sphere of natural law equally with cosmic phenomena. At length, in the great work of Auguste Comte, scientific method was applied so effectively and concretely to the general problem that, despite his serious fallacies, social science again took rank as a solid study.

2. In England the anti-revolution reaction was visible in this as in other fields of thought. Hume and Gibbon had set the example of a strictly naturalistic treatment of history; and the clerical Robertson was faithful to their method; but Hallam makes a stand for supernaturalism even in applying a generally scientific critical standard. The majority of historical events he is content to let pass as natural, even as the average man sees the hand of the doctor in his escape from rheumatism, but the hand of God in his escape from a railway accident. Discussing the defeat of Barbarossa at Legnano, Hallam pronounces that it is not "material to allege..... that the accidental destruction of Frederic's army by disease enabled the cities of Lombardy to succeed in their resistance.....Providence reserves to itself various means by which the bonds of the oppressor may be broken; and it is not for human sagacity to anticipate

[1] It is doubtful whether C. A. Walckenaer should be so described. His *Essai sur l'histoire de l'espèce humaine* (1798) has real scientific value.
[2] See the author's *Buckle and his Critics*, 1895.

whether the army of a conqueror shall moulder in the unwholesome marshes of Rome or stiffen with frost in a Russian winter."[1]

But Hallam was nearly the last historian of distinction to vend such nugatory oracles as either a philosophy or a religion of history. Even the oracular Carlyle did not clearly stipulate for "special providences" in his histories, though he leant to that conception; and though Ranke also uses mystifying language, he writes as a Naturalist; while Michelet is openly anti-clerical. Grote was wholly a rationalist; the historic method of his friend and competitor, Bishop Thirlwall, was as non-theological as his; Macaulay, whatever might be his conformities or his bias, wrote in his most secular spirit when exhibiting theological evolution; and George Long indicated his rationalism again and again.[2] It is only in the writings of the most primitively prejudiced of those German historians who eliminate ethics from historiography that the "God" factor is latterly emphasized in ostensibly expert historiography.

3. All study of economics and of political history fostered such views, and at length, in England and America, by the works of DRAPER and BUCKLE, in the sixth and later decades of the century, the conception of law in human history was widely if slowly popularized, to the due indignation of the supernaturalists, who saw the last great field of natural phenomena passing like others into the realm of science. Draper's avowed theism partly protected him from attack; but Buckle's straightforward attacks on creeds and on Churches brought upon him a peculiarly fierce hostility, which was unmollified by his incidental avowal of belief in a future life and his erratic attacks upon unbelievers. For long this hostility told against his sociological teaching. Spencer's *Principles of Sociology* nevertheless clinched the scientific claim by taking sociological law for granted; and the new science has continually progressed in acceptance. In the hands of all its leading modern exponents in all countries—Lester Ward, Giddings, Guyau, Letourneau, Tarde, Ferri, Durkheim, De Greef, Gumplowicz, Lilienfeld, Schäffle—it has been entirely naturalistic, though some Catholic professors continue to inject into it theological assumptions. It cannot be said, however, that a general doctrine of social evolution is even yet fully established. The problem is complicated by the profoundly contentious issues of practical politics; and in the resulting diffidence of official teachers there arises a notable opening for obscurantism,

[1] *Europe during the Middle Ages*, 11th ed. i. 377.
[2] Cp. his *Decline of the Roman Republic*, 1864, i. 345–47; and note on p. 447 of his translation of Plutarch's *Brutus*, Bohn ed. of *Lives*, vol. iv.

which has been duly forthcoming. In the first half of the century such an eminent Churchman as Dean Milman incurred at the hands of J. H. Newman and others the charge of writing the history of the Jews and of early Christianity in a rationalistic spirit, presenting religion as a "human" phenomenon.[1] Later Churchmen, with all their preparation, have rarely gone further.

4. Two lines of scientific study, it would appear, must be thoroughly followed up before the ground can be pronounced clear for authoritative conclusions—those of anthropological archæology (including comparative mythology and comparative hierology) and economic analysis. On both lines, however, great progress has been made; and on the former in particular the result is profoundly disintegrating to traditional belief. The lessons of anthropology had been long available to the modern world before they began to be scientifically applied to the "science of religion." The issues raised by Fontenelle and De Brosses in the eighteenth century were in practice put aside in favour of direct debate over Christian history, dogma, and ethic; though many of the deists dwelt on the analogies of "heathen" and "revealed" religion. As early as 1824 Benjamin Constant made a vigorous attempt to bring the whole phenomena under a general evolutionary conception in his work *De la Religion*.[2] But it was not till the treasure of modern anthropology had been scientifically massed by such students as Theodor Waitz (*Anthropologie der Naturvölker*, 6 Bde. 1859–71) and Adolf Bastian (*Der Mensch in der Geschichte*, 3 Bde. 1860), and above all by Sir EDWARD TYLOR, who first lucidly elaborated the science of it all, that the arbitrary religious conception of the psychic evolution of humanity began to be decisively superseded.

In 1871 Tylor could still say that "to many educated minds there seems something presumptuous and repulsive in the view that the history of mankind is part and parcel of the history of nature; that our thoughts, wills, and actions accord with laws as definite as those which govern the motion of waves, the combination of acids and bases, and the growth of plants and animals."[3] But the old repulsion had already been profoundly impaired by biological and social science; and Tylor's book met with hardly any of the odium that had been lavished on Darwin and Buckle. "It will

[1] See *The Dynamics of Religion*, pp. 227–33.

[2] It is difficult to understand the claim made for Hegel by his translator, the Rev. E. B. Speirs, that any student of his lectures on the *Philosophy of Religion* "will be constrained to admit that in them we have the true 'sources' of the evolution principle as applied to the study of religion" (edit. pref. to trans. of work cited, i, p. viii). To say nothing of Fontenelle and De Brosses, Constant had laid out the whole subject before Hegel.

[3] *Primitive Culture*, i, 2.

make me for the future look on religion—a belief in the soul, etc.—from a different point of view," wrote Darwin[1] to Tylor on its appearance. So thoroughly did the book press home the fact of the evolution of religious thought from savagery that thenceforward the science of mythology, which had never yet risen in professional hands to the height of vision of Fontenelle, began to be decisively adapted to the anthropological standpoint.

In the hands of Spencer[2] all the phenomena of primitive mental life—beliefs, practices, institutions—are considered as purely natural data, no other point of view being recognized; and the anthropological treatises of Lord Avebury (Sir John Lubbock) are at the same standpoint. When at length the mass of savage usages which lie around the beginnings of historic religion began to be closely scanned and classified, notably in the great latter-day compilations of Sir J. G. Frazer, what had appeared to be sacred peculiarities of the Christian cult were seen to be but variants of universal primitive practice. Thenceforth the problem for serious inquirers was not whether Christianity was a supernatural revelation—the supernatural is no longer a ground of serious discussion—but whether the central narrative is historical in any degree whatever. The defence is latterly conducted from a standpoint indistinguishable from the Unitarian. But an enormous amount of anthropological research is being carried on without any reference to such issues, the total effect being to exclude the supernaturalist premiss from the study of religion as completely as from that of astronomy.

Section 6.—Philosophy and Ethics

1. The philosophy of Kant, while giving the theological class a new apparatus of defence as against common-sense freethinking, forced none the less on theistic philosophy a great advance from the orthodox positions. Thus his immediate successors, Fichte and Schelling, produced systems of which one was loudly denounced as atheistic, and the other as pantheistic,[3] despite its dualism. Neither seems to have had much influence on concrete religious opinion outside the universities;[4] and when Schelling in old age turned Catholic obscurantist, the gain to clericalism was not great. Hegel in turn loosely wrought out a system of which the great merit is to substitute the conception of existence as relation for the nihilistic idealism of Fichte and the unsolved dualism of Schelling. This

[1] *Life and Letters*, i, 151.
[2] *Principles of Sociology*, 3 vols. 1876-96.
[3] Cp. Saintes, *Hist. crit. du rationalisme en Allemagne*, p. 323.
[4] *Id.* pp. 322-24.

system he latterly adapted to practical exigencies[1] by formulating, as Kant had recently done, a philosophic Trinity and hardily defining Christianity as "Absolute Religion" in comparison with the various forms of "Natural Religion." Nevertheless, he counted in a great degree as a disintegrating influence, and was in a very practical way anti-Christian. More explicitly than Kant, he admitted that the *Aufklärung*, the freethinking movement of the past generation, had made good its case so far as it went; and though, by the admission of admirers, he took for granted without justification that it had carried its point with the world at large,[2] he was chronically at strife with the theologians as such, charging them on the one hand with deserting the dogmas which he re-stated,[3] and on the other declaring that the common run of them "know as little of God as a blind man sees of a painting, even though he handles the frame."[4] Of the belief in miracles he was simply contemptuous. "Whether at the marriage of Cana the guests got a little more wine or a little less is a matter of absolutely no importance; nor is it any more essential to demand whether the man with the withered hand was healed; for millions of men go about with withered and crippled limbs, whose limbs no man heals." On the story of the marks made for the information of the angel on the Hebrew houses at the Passover he asks: "Would the angel not have known them without these marks?", adding: "This faith has no real interest for Spirit."[5] Such writing, from the orthodox point of view, was not compensated for by a philosophy of Christianity which denaturalized its dogmas, and a presentment of the God-idea and of moral law which made religion alternately a phase of philosophy and a form of political utilitarianism.

As to the impression made by Hegel on most Christians, compare Hagenbach, *German Rationalism* (Eng. tr. of *Kirchengeschichte*), pp. 364–69; Renan, *Études d'histoire religieuse*, 5e édit. p. 406; J. D. Morell, *Histor. and Crit. View of the Spec. Philos. of Europe in the Nineteenth Century*, 2nd ed. 1847, ii, 189–91; Robins, *A Defence of the Faith*, 1862, pt. i, pp. 135–41, 176; Eschenmenger, *Die Hegel'sche Religionsphilosophie*, 1834; quoted in Beard's *Voices of the Church*, p. 8; Leo, *Die Hegelingen*, 1838; and Reinhard, *Lehrbuch der Geschichte der Philosophie*, 2nd ed. 1839, pp. 753–54—also cited by Beard, pp. 9–12.

[1] As to Hegel's mental development cp. Dr. Beard on "Strauss, Hegel, and their Opinions," in *Voices of the Church in Reply to Strauss*, 1845, pp. 3–4.
[2] E. Caird, *Hegel*, 1883, p. 94.
[3] *E.g. Philos. of Religion*, introd. Eng. tr. i, 38–40.
[4] *Id.* p. 41. Cp. pp. 216–17.
[5] *Id.* p. 219.

The gist of Hegel's rehabilitation of Christianity is well set forth by Prof. A. Seth Pringle-Pattison in his essay on *The Philosophy of Religion in Kant and Hegel* (rep. in *The Philos. Radicals and other Essays*, 1907), ch. iii. Considered in connection with his demonstration that in politics the Prussian State was the ideal government, it is seen to be even more of an arbitrary and unveridical accommodation to the social environment than Kant's *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*. It approximates intellectually to the process by which the neo-Platonists and other eclectics of the classic decadence found a semblance of allegorical or symbolical justification for every item in the old theology. Nothing could be more false to the spirit of Hegel's general philosophy than the representing of Christianity as a culmination or "ultimate" of all religion; and nothing, in fact, was more readily seen by his contemporaries.

We who look back, however, may take a more lenient view of Hegel's process of adaptation than was taken in the next generation by Haym, who, in his *Hegel und seine Zeit* (1857), presented him as always following the prevailing fashion in thought, and lending himself as the tool of reactionary government. Hegel's officialism was in the main probably wholehearted. Even as Kant felt driven to do something for social conservation at the outbreak of the French Revolution, and Fichte to shape for his country the sinister ideal of *The Closed Industrial State*, so Hegel, after seeing Prussia shaken to its foundations at the battle of Jena and being turned out of his own house by the looting French soldiers, was very naturally impelled to support the existing State by quasi-philosophico-religious considerations. It was an abandonment of the true function of philosophy; but it may have been done in all good faith. An intense political conservatism was equally marked in Strauss, who dreaded "demagogy," and in Schopenhauer, who left his fortune to the fund for the widows and families of soldiers killed or injured in the revolutionary strifes of 1848. It came in their case from the same source—an alarmed memory of social convulsion. The fact remains that Hegel had no real part in the State religion which he crowned with formulas.

Not only does Hegel's conception of the Absolute make deity simply the eternal process of the universe, and the divine consciousness indistinguishable from the total consciousness of mankind,[1] but his abstractions lend themselves equally to all creeds;[2] and some of the most revolutionary of the succeeding movements of German

[1] Cp. Morell, as cited, and pp. 195-96; and Feuerbach, as summarized by Baur, *Kirchengeschichte des 19ten Jahrh.* p. 390. [2] Cp. Michelet as cited by Morell, ii, 192-93.

thought—as those of Vatke, Strauss,[1] Feuerbach, and Marx—professedly founded on him. It is certainly a striking testimony to the influence of Hegel that five such powerful innovators as Vatke[2] in Old-Testament, Bruno Bauer and Strauss in New-Testament criticism, Feuerbach in the philosophy of religion, and Marx in social philosophy, should at first fly the Hegelian flag. It can hardly have been that Hegel's formulas sufficed to generate the criticism they all brought to bear upon their subject matter; rather we must suppose that their naturally powerful minds were attracted by the critical and reconstructive aspects of his doctrine; but the philosophy which stimulated them must have had great affinities for revolution, as well as for all forms of the idea of evolution.

2. In respect of his formal championship of Christianity Hegel's method, arbitrary even for him, appealed neither to the orthodox nor, with a few exceptions,[3] to his own disciples, some of whom, as Ruge, at length definitely renounced Christianity.[4] In 1854 Heine told his French readers that there were in Germany "fanatical monks of atheism" who would willingly burn Voltaire as a besotted deist;[5] and Heine himself, in his last years of suffering and of revived poetic religiosity, could see in Hegel's system only atheism. BRUNO BAUER at first opposed Strauss, and afterwards went even further than he, professing Hegelianism all the while.[6] SCHOPENHAUER and HARTMANN in turn being even less sustaining to orthodoxy, and later orthodox systems failing to impress, there came in due course the cry of "Back to Kant," where at least orthodoxy had some formal semblance of sanction.

Hartmann's work on *The Self-Decomposition of Christianity*[7] is a stringent exposure of the unreality of what passed for "liberal Christianity" in Germany a generation ago, and an appeal for a "new concrete religion" of monism or pantheism as a bulwark against Ultramontanism. On this monism, however, Hartmann insisted on grounding his pessimism; and with this pessimistic pantheism he hoped to outbid Catholicism against the "irreligious" Strauss and the liberal Christians—in his view no less irreligious.

[1] As to Strauss cp. Beard, as above cited, pp. 21–22, 30; and Zeller, *David Friedrich Strauss*, Eng. tr. pp. 35, 47–48, 71–72, etc.

[2] As to Vatke see Pfleiderer, as cited, p. 252 *sq.*; Cheyne, *Founders of O. T. Criticism*, 1893, p. 135.

[3] *E.g.* Dr. Hutchison Stirling. See his trans. of Schwegler's *Handbook of the History of Philosophy*, 6th ed. p. 438 *sq.*

[4] Baur, last cit. p. 389.

[5] *Geständnisse*. Werke, iv, 33. Cp. iii, 110.

[6] Cp. Hagenbach, pp. 369–72; Farrar. *Crit. Hist. of Freethought*, pp. 387–88. On Bauer's critical development and academic career see Baur, *Kirchengesch. des 19ten Jahrh.* pp. 386–89.

[7] *Die Selbstzersetzung des Christenthums und die Religion der Zukunft*, 2te Aufl. 1874 trans. in Eng. as *The Religion of the Future*, 1886.

It does not seem to have had much acceptance. On the whole, the effect of all German philosophy has probably been to make for the general discredit of theistic thinking, the surviving forms of Hegelianism being little propitious to current religion. And though Schopenhauer and NIETZSCHE can hardly be said to carry on the task of philosophy either in spirit or in effect, yet the rapid intensification of hostility to current religion which their writings in particular manifest[1] must be admitted to stand for a deep revolt against the Kantian compromise. And this revolt was bound to come about. The truth-shunning tactic of Kant, Fichte, and Hegel —aiming at the final discrediting of the *Aufklärung* as a force that had done its work, and could find no more to do, however it be explained and excused—was a mere expression of their own final lack of scientific instinct. It is hard to believe that thinkers who had perceived and asserted the fact of progression in religion could suppose that true philosophy consisted in putting a stop on à priori grounds to the historical analysis, and setting up an "ultimate" of philosophic theory. The straightforward investigators, seeking simply for truth, have passed on to posterity a spirit which, correcting their inevitable errors, reaches a far deeper and wider comprehension of religious evolution and psychosis than could be reached by the verbalizing methods of the self-satisfied and self-sufficing metaphysicians. These, so far as they prevailed, did but delay the advance of real knowledge. Their work, in fact, was fatally shaped by the general reaction against the Revolution, which in their case took a quasi-philosophic form, while in France and England it worked out as a crude return to clerical and political authoritarianism.[2]

3. From the collisions of philosophic systems in Germany there emerged two great practical freethinking forces, the teachings of LUDWIG FEUERBACH (1804–76), who was obliged to give up his lecturing at Erlangen in 1830 after the issue of his *Thoughts upon Death and Immortality*, and LUDWIG BÜCHNER, who was deprived of his chair of clinic at Tübingen in 1855 for his *Force and Matter*. The former, originally a Hegelian, expressly broke away from his master, declaring that, whereas Hegel belonged to the "Old Testament" of modern philosophy, he himself would set forth the New, wherein Hegel's fundamentally incoherent treatment of deity (as the total process of things on the one hand, and an objective

[1] See Schopenhauer's dialogues on *Religion* and *Immortality*, and his essay on *The Christian System* (Eng. tr. by T. B. Saunders), and Nietzsche's *Antichrist*. The latter work is discussed by the writer in *Essays in Sociology*, vol. ii.

[2] Prof. Seth Pringle-Pattison, who passes many just criticisms on their work (*Philos. of Relig. in Kant and Hegel*, rep. with *The Philosophical Radicals*), does not seem to suspect this determination.

personality on the other) should be cured.[1] Feuerbach accordingly, in his *Essence of Christianity* (1841) and *Essence of Religion* (1851), supplied one of the first adequate modern statements of the positively rationalistic position as against Christianity and theism, in terms of philosophic as well as historical insight—a statement to which there is no characteristically modern answer save in terms of the refined sentimentalism of the youthful Renan,[2] fundamentally averse alike to scientific precision and to intellectual consistency.

Feuerbach's special service consists in the rebuttal of the metaphysic in which religion had chronically taken refuge from the straightforward criticism of freethinkers, in itself admittedly unanswerable. They had shown many times over its historic falsity, its moral perversity, and its philosophic self-contradiction; and the more astute official defenders, leaving to the less competent the task of re-vindicating miracles and prophecy and defending the indefensible, proceeded to shroud the particular defeat in a pseudo-philosophic process which claimed for all religion alike an indestructible inner truth, in the light of which the instinctive believer could again make shift to affirm his discredited credences. It was this process which Feuerbach exploded, for all who cared to read him. He had gone through it. Intensely religious in his youth, he had found in the teaching of Hegel an attractive philosophic garb for his intuitional thought. But a wider concern than Hegel's for actual knowledge, and for the knowledge of the actual, moved him to say to his teacher, on leaving: "Two years have I attached myself to you; two years have I completely devoted to your philosophy. Now I feel the necessity of starting in the directly opposite way: I am going to study anatomy."[3] It may have been that what saved him from the Hegelian fate of turning to the end the squirrel-cage of conformist philosophy was the personal experience which put him in fixed antagonism to the governmental forces that Hegel was moved to serve. The hostility evoked by his *Thoughts on Death and Immortality* completed his alienation from the official side of things, and left him to the life of a devoted truth-seeker—a career as rare in Germany as elsewhere. The upshot was that Feuerbach, in the words of Strauss, "broke the double yoke in which, under Hegel, philosophy and theology still went."[4]

For the task he undertook he had consummately equipped

[1] Baur gives a good summary, *Kirchengeschichte*, pp. 390–94.
[2] "M. Feuerbach et la nouvelle école hégélienne," in *Études d'histoire religieuse*.
[3] A. Kohut, *Ludwig Feuerbach, sein Leben und seine Werke*, 1909, p. 48.
[4] *Die Halben und die Ganzen*, p. 50. "Feuerbach a ruiné le système de Hegel et fondé la positivisme." A. Lévy, *La philosophie de Feuerbach et son influence sur la litt. allemande*, 1904, introd. p. xxii.

himself. In a series of four volumes (*History of Modern Philosophy from Bacon to Spinoza*, 1833; *Exposition and Criticism of the Leibnitzian Philosophy*, 1837; *Pierre Bayle*, 1838; *On Philosophy and Christianity*, 1839) he explored the field of philosophy, and re-studied theology in the light of moral and historical criticism, before he produced his masterpiece, *Das Wesen des Christenthums*. Here the tactic of Hegel is turned irresistibly on the Hegelian defence; and religion, defiantly declared by Hegel to be an affair of self-consciousness,[1] is shown to be in very truth nothing else. "Such as are a man's thoughts and dispositions, such is his God; so much worth as a man has, so much and no more has his God. Consciousness of God is self-consciousness; knowledge of God is self-knowledge."[2] This of course is openly what Hegelian theism is in effect—philosophic atheism; and though Feuerbach at times disclaimed the term, he declares in his preface that "atheism, at least in the sense of this work, is the secret of religion itself; that religion itself.....in its heart, in its essence, believes in nothing else than the truth and divinity of human nature." In the preliminary section on *The Essence of Religion* he makes his position clear once for all: "A God who has abstract predicates has also an abstract existence.....Not the attribute of the divinity, but the divineness or deity of the attribute, is the first true Divine Being. Thus what theology and philosophy have held to be God, the Absolute, the Infinite, is not God; but that which they have held not to be God, is God—namely the attribute, the quality, whatever has reality. Hence, he alone is the true atheist to whom the predicates of the Divine Being—for example, love, wisdom, justice—are nothing; not he to whom merely the subject of these predicates is nothing.....These have an intrinsic, independent reality; they force their recognition upon man by their very nature; they are self-evident truths to him; they approve, they attest themselves.....The idea of God is dependent on the idea of justice, of benevolence....."

This is obviously the answer to Baur, who, after paying tribute to the personality of Feuerbach, and presenting a tolerably fair summary of his critical philosophy, can find no answer to it save the inept protest that it is one-sided in respect of its reduction of religion to the subjective (the very course insisted on by a hundred defenders!), that it favours the communistic and other extreme tendencies of the time, and that it brings everything "under the

[1] *E.g.* "All knowledge, all conviction, all piety.....is based on the principle that in the spirit, as such, the consciousness of God exists immediately with the consciousness of itself." *Philos. of Relig.* Eng. tr. introd. i, 42–43.

[2] *Essence of Christianity*, Eng. tr. 1854, p. 12.

rude rule of egoism."[1] Here a philosophic and an aspersive meaning are furtively combined in one word. The scientific subjectivism of Feuerbach's analysis of religion is no more a vindication or acceptance of "rude egoism" than is the Christian formula of "God's will" a condonation of murder. The restraint of egoism by altruism lies in human character and polity alike for the rationalist and for the irrationalist, as Baur must have known well enough after his long survey of Church history. His really contemptible escape from Feuerbach's criticism, under cover of alternate cries of "Communism" and "egoism"—a self-stultification which needs no comment—is simply one more illustration of the fashion in which, since the time of Kant, philosophy in Germany as elsewhere has been chronically demoralized by resort to non-philosophical tests. "Max Stirner" (pen-name of Johann Caspar Schmidt, 1806–1856) carried the philosophic "egoism" of Feuerbach about as far in words as might be; but his work on the Ego (*Der Einzige und sein Eigenthum*, 1845) remains an ethical curiosity rather than a force.[2]

4. Arnold Ruge (1802–1880), who was of the same philosophical school,[3] gave his life to a disinterested propaganda of democracy and light; and if in 1870 he capitulated to the new Empire, and thereby won a small pension for the two last years of his life, he was but going the way of many another veteran, dazzled in his old age by very old fires. His *Addresses on Religion, its Rise and Fall: to the educated among its Reverers*[4] (1869) is a lucid and powerful performance, proceeding from a mythological analysis of religion to a cordial plea for rationalism in all things. The charge of "materialism" was for him no bugbear. "Truly," he writes, "we are not without the earth and the solar system, not without the plants and the animals, not without head. But whoever has head enough to understand science and its conquests in the field of nature and of mind (*Geist*) knows also that the material world rests in the immaterial, moves in it, and is by it animated, freed, and ensouled; that soul and idea are incarnate in Nature, but that also logic, idea, spirit, and science free themselves out of Nature, become abstracted and as immaterial Power erect their own realm, the realm of spirit in State, science, and art."[5]

5. On Feuerbach's *Essence of Religion* followed the resounding explosion of Büchner's *Force and Matter* (1855), which in large

[1] *Kirchengeschichte des 19ten Jahrhunderts*, pp. 393–94.
[2] Cp. A. Lévy, as cited, ch. iv. [3] *Id.* ch. ii.
[4] *Reden über Religion, ihr Entstehen und Vergehen, an dis Gebildeten unter ihren Verehrern*—a parody of the title of the famous work of Schleiermacher.
[5] Work cited, p. 119.

measure, but with much greater mastery of scientific detail, does for the plain man of his century what d'Holbach in his chief work sought to do for his day. Constantly vilified, even in the name of philosophy, in the exact tone and spirit of animal irritation which marks the religious vituperation of all forms of rationalism in previous ages; and constantly misrepresented as professing to explain an infinite universe when it does but show the hollowness of all supernaturalist explanations,[1] the book steadily holds its ground as a manual of anti-mysticism.[2] Between them, Feuerbach and Büchner may be said to have framed for their age an atheistic "System of Nature," concrete and abstract, without falling into the old error of substituting one apriorism for another. Whosoever endorses Baur's protest against the "one-sidedness" of Feuerbach, who treats of religion on its chosen ground of self-consciousness, has but to turn to Büchner's study of the objective world and see whether his cause fares any better.

6. In France the course of thought had been hardly less revolutionary. Philosophy, like everything else, had been affected by the legitimist restoration; and between Victor Cousin and the other "classic philosophers" of the first third of the century orthodoxy was nominally reinstated. Yet even among these there was no firm coherence. Maine de Biran, one of the shrinking spirits who passed gradually into an intolerant authoritarianism from fear of the perpetual pressures of reason, latterly declared (1821) that a philosophy which ascribed to deity only infinite thought or supreme intelligence, eliminating volition and love, was pure atheism; and this pronouncement struck at the philosophy of Cousin. Nor was this species of orthodoxy any more successful than the furious irrationalism of Joseph De Maistre in setting up a philosophic form of faith, as distinct from the cult of rhetoric and sentiment founded by Chateaubriand. Cousin was deeply distrusted by those who knew him, and at the height of his popularity he was contemned by the more competent minds around him, such as Sainte-Beuve, Comte, and Edgar Quinet.[3] The latter thinker himself counted for a measure of rationalism, though he argued for theism, and undertook to make good the historicity of Jesus against those who challenged it. For

[1] Büchner expressly rejected the term "materialism" because of its misleading implications or connotations. Cp. in Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner's *Charles Bradlaugh* the discussion in Pt. ii, ch. i, § 3 (by J. M. R.).

[2] While the cognate works of Carl Vogt and Moleschott have gone out of print, Büchner's, recast again and again, continues to be republished.

[3] Cp. Paul Deschanel, *Figures Littéraires*, 1889, pp. 130-32, 171-73; Lévy-Bruhl, *The Philosophy of Auguste Comte*, Eng. tr. 1903, p. 190; and Ch. Adam, *La Philosophie en France*, 1894, p. 228.

the rest, even among the ostensibly conservative and official philosophers, Théodore Jouffroy, an eclectic, who held the chair of moral philosophy in the Faculté des Lettres at Paris, was at heart an unbeliever from his youth up,[1] and even in his guarded writings was far from satisfying the orthodox. "God," he wrote,[2] "interposes as little in the regular development of humanity as in the course of the solar system." He added a fatalistic theorem of divine predetermination, which he verbally salved in the usual way by saying that predetermination presupposed individual liberty. Eclecticism thus fell, as usual, between two stools; but it was not orthodoxy that would gain. On another line Jouffroy openly bantered the authoritarians on their appeal to a popular judgment which they declared to be incapable of pronouncing on religious questions.[3]

7. On retrospect, the whole official French philosophy of the period, however conservative in profession, is found to have been at bottom rationalistic, and only superficially friendly to faith. The Abbé Felice de Lamennais declaimed warmly against *L'indifférence en matière de religion* (4 vols. 1818–24), resorting to the old Catholic device, first employed by Montaigne, of turning Pyrrhonism against unbelief. Having ostensibly discredited the authority of the senses and the reason (by which he was to be read and understood), he proceeded in the customary way to set up the ancient standard of the *consensus universalis*, the authority of the majority, the least reflective and the most fallacious. This he sought to elevate into a kind of corporate wisdom, superior to all individual judgment; and he marched straight into the countersense of claiming the pagan consensus as a confirmation of religion in general, while arguing for a religion which claimed to put aside paganism as error. The final logical content of the thesis was the inanity that the majority for the time being must be right.

Damiron, writing his *Essai sur l'histoire de la philosophie en France au XIXe Siècle* in 1828, replies in a fashion more amiable than reassuring, commenting on the "strange skepticism" of Lamennais as to the human reason.[4] For himself, he takes up the parable of Lessing, and declares that where Lessing spoke doubtfully, men had now reached conviction. It was no longer a question of whether, but of when, religion was to be recast in terms of fuller intelligence. "In this religious regeneration we shall be to the

[1] Adam, as cited, pp. 227–30.

[2] In his *Mélanges philosophiques* (1833), Eng. trans. (incomplete) by George Ripley, *Philos. Essays of Th. Jouffroy*, Edinburgh, 1839, ii, 32. Ripley, who was one of the American transcendentalist group and a member of the Brook Farm Colony, indicates his own semi-rationalism in his Introductory Note, p. xxv.

[3] *Mélanges philosophiques*, trans. as cited, ii, 95.

[4] *Essai*, cited, i, 232, 237.

Christians what the Christians were to the Jews, and the Jews to the patriarchs: we shall be Christians and something more." The theologian of the future will be half-physicist, half-philosopher. "We shall study God through nature and through men; and a new Messiah will not be necessary to teach us miraculously what we can learn of ourselves and by our natural lights." Christianity has been a useful discipline; but "our education is so advanced that henceforth we can be our own teachers; and, having no need of an extraneous inspiration, we draw faith from science."[1] "Prayer is good, doubtless," but it "has only a mysterious, uncertain, remote action on our environment."[2] All this under Louis Philippe, from a professor at the École Normale. Not to this day has official academic philosophy in Britain ventured to go so far. In France the brains were never out, even under the Restoration. Lamennais himself gave the proof. His employment of skepticism as an aid to faith had been, like Montaigne's, the expression of a temperament slow to reach rational positions, but surely driven thither. As a boy of twelve, when a priest sought to prepare him for communion, he had shown such abnormal incredulity that the priest gave him up; and later he read omnivorously among the deists of the eighteenth century, Rousseau attracting him in particular. Later he passed through a religious crisis, slowly covering ground which others traverse early. He did not become a communicant till he was twenty-two; he entered the seminary only at twenty-seven; and he was ordained only when he was nearly thirty-two.

Yet he had experienced much. Already in 1808 his *Réflexions sur l'état de l'église* had been suppressed by Napoleon's police; in 1814 he had written, along with his brother, in whose seminary he taught mathematics, a treatise maintaining the papal claims; and in the Hundred Days of 1815 he took flight to London. His mind was always at work. His *Essay on Indifference* expressed his need of a conviction; with unbelief he could reckon and sympathize; with indifference he could not; but when the indifference was by his own account the result of reflective unbelief he treated it in the same fashion as the spontaneous form. At bottom, his quarrel was with reason. Yet the very element in his mind which prompted his anti-rational polemic was ratiocinative; and as he slowly reached clearness of thought he came more and more into conflict with Catholicism. It was all very well to flout the individual reason in the name of the universal; but to give mankind a total infallibility

[1] *Id.* pp. 241-43. [2] *Id.* p. 221.

was not the way to satisfy a pope or a Church which claimed a monopoly of the gift. In 1824 he was well received by the pope: but when in 1830 he began to write Liberal articles in the journal *L'Avenir*, in which he collaborated with Lacordaire, the Comte de Montalembert, and other neo-Catholics, offence was quickly taken, and the journal was soon suspended. Lamennais and his disciples Lacordaire and Montalembert went to Rome to plead their cause. but were coldly received; and on their way home in 1832 received at Munich a missive of severe reprimand.

Rendering formal obedience, Lamennais retired, disillusioned, with his friends to his and his brother's estate in Brittany, and began his process of intellectual severance. In January, 1833, he performed mass, and at this stage he held by his artificial distinction between the spheres of faith and reason. In May of that year he declared his determination to place himself "as a writer outside of the Church and Catholicism," declaring that "outside of Catholicism, outside faith, there is reason; outside of the Church there is humanity; I place myself (*je me renferme*) in this sphere."[1] Still he claimed to be *simple fidèle en religion*, and to combine "fidelity in obedience with liberty in science."[2] In January of 1834, however, he had ceased to perform any clerical function; and his *Paroles d'un Croyant*, published in that year, stand for a faith which the Church reckoned as infidelity.

Lacordaire, separating from his insubordinate colleague, published an *Examen de la philosophie de M. de Lamennais*, in which the true papal standpoint was duly taken. Thenceforth Lamennais was an Ishmaelite. Feeling as strongly in politics as in everything else, he was infuriated by the brutal suppression of the Polish rising in 1831–32; and the government of Louis Philippe pleased him as little as that of Charles X had done. In 1841 he was sentenced to a year's imprisonment for his brochure *Le pays et le gouvernement* (1840). Shortly before his death in 1854 he claimed that he had never changed: "I have gone on, that is all." But he had in effect changed from a Catholic to a pantheist;[3] and in 1848, as a member of the National Assembly, he more than once startled his colleagues by "an affectation of impiety."[4] On his deathbed he refused to receive the curé of the parish, and by his own wish he was buried without any religious ceremony, in the *fosse commune* of the poor and with no cross on his grave.

[1] *Correspondance*, 1858–86, letter of May 26, 1833.
[2] Letters of August 1 and November 25.
[3] Cp. Ch. Adam, *La Philosophie en France*, 1894, p. 105.
[4] *Id.* p. 84.

Such a type does not very clearly belong to rationalism; and Lamennais never enrolled himself save negatively under that flag. Always emotional and impulsive, he had in his period of aggressive fervour as a Churchman played a rather sinister part in the matter of the temporary insanity of Auguste Comte, lending himself to the unscrupulous tactics of the philosopher's mother, who did not stick at libelling her son's wife in order to get him put under clerical control.[1] It was perhaps well for him that he was forced out of the Church; for his love of liberty was too subjective to have qualified him for a wise use of power. But the spectacle of such a temperament forced into antagonism with the Church on moral and social grounds could not but stimulate anti-clericalism in France, whatever his philosophy may have done to promote rational thinking.

8. The most energetic and characteristic philosophy produced in the new France was that of AUGUSTE COMTE, which as set forth in the *Cours de Philosophie Positive* (1830–42) practically reaffirmed while it recast and supplemented the essentials of the anti-theological rationalism of the previous age, and in that sense rebuilt French positivism, giving that new name to the naturalistic principle. Though Comte's direct following was never large, it is significant that soon after the completion of his *Cours* we find Saisset lamenting that the war between the clergy and the philosophers, "suspended by the great political commotion of 1830," had been "revived with a new energy."[2] The later effort of Comte to frame a politico-ecclesiastical system never succeeded beyond the formation of a politically powerless sect; and the attempt to prove its consistency with his philosophic system by claiming that from the first he had harboured a plan of social regulation[3] is beside the case. A man's way of thinking may involve intellectual contradictions all through his life; and Comte's did. Positivism in the scientific sense cannot be committed to any one man's scheme for regulating society and conserving "cultus"; and Comte's was merely one of the many evoked in France by the memory of an age of revolutions. It belongs, indeed, to the unscientific and unphilosophic side of his mind, the craving for authority and the temper of ascendency, which connect with his admiration of the medieval Church. Himself philosophically an atheist, he condemned atheists because they mostly contemned his passion for regimentation. By reason of this idiosyncrasy and of the habitually dictatorial tone of his doctrine,

[1] Littré, *Auguste Comte et la philosophie positive*, pp. 123, 125–26.
[2] Article in 1844, rep. in *Essais sur la philosophie et la religion*, 1845, p. 1.
[3] See M. Lévy-Bruhl's *Philosophy of Auguste Comte*, Eng. tr. pp. 10–15. M. Lévy-Bruhl really does not attempt to meet Littré's argument, which he puts aside.

he has made his converts latterly more from the religious than from the freethinking ranks. But both in France and in England his philosophy tinged all the new thought of his time, his leading English adherents in particular being among the most esteemed publicists of the day. Above all, he introduced the conception of a "science of society" where hitherto there had ruled the haziest forms of "providentialism." In France the general effect of the rationalistic movement had been such that when TAINE, under the Third Empire, assailed the whole "classic" school in his *Philosophes classiques* (1857), his success was at once generally recognized, and a non-Comtist positivism was thenceforth the ruling philosophy. The same thing has happened in Italy, where quite a number of university professors are explicitly positivist in their philosophic teaching.[1]

9. In Britain, where abstract philosophy after Berkeley had been mainly left to Hume and the Scotch thinkers who opposed him, metaphysics was for a generation practically overriden by the moral and social sciences; Hartley's Christian Materialism making small headway as formulated by him, though it was followed up by the Unitarian Priestley. The reaction against the Revolution, indeed, seems to have evicted everything in the nature of active philosophic thought from the universities in the first decade of the nineteenth century; at Oxford it was taught in a merely traditionary fashion, in lamentable contrast to what was going on in Germany;[2] and in Scotland in the 'thirties things had fallen to a similar level.[3] It was over practical issues that new thought germinated in England. The proof of the change wrought in the direction of native thought is seen in the personalities of the men who, in the teeth of the reaction, applied rationalistic method to ethics and psychology. BENTHAM and JAMES MILL were in their kindred fields among the most convinced and active freethinkers of their day, the former attacking both clericalism and orthodoxy;[4] while the latter, no less pronounced in his private opinions, more cautiously built up a rigorously naturalistic psychology in his *Analysis of the Human Mind* (1829). Bentham's utilitarianism was so essentially anti-Christian that he could hardly have been more disliked by discerning theists if he had avowed his share in the authorship of the atheistic *Analysis of the Influence of Natural Religion*, which, elaborated

[1] Cp. Prof. Botta's chapter in Ueberweg's *Hist. of Philos.* ii, 513-16.
[2] Veitch's *Memoir of Sir William Hamilton*, 1869, p. 54. Cp. Hamilton's own *Discussions*, 1852, p. 187 (rep. of article of 1839).
[3] Veitch, p. 214.
[4] In his *Church of Englandism and its Catechism Examined* (1818), and *Not Paul but Jesus* (1823), by "Gamaliel Smith."

from his manuscript by no less a thinker than GEORGE GROTE, was published in 1822.[1] Pseudonymous as that essay is, it seeks to guard against the risk of prosecution by the elaborate stipulation that what it discusses is always the influence of *natural* religion on life, revealed religion being another matter. But this is of course the merest stratagem, the whole drift of the book being a criticism of the effects of the current religion on contemporary society. It greatly influenced J. S. Mill, whose essay on *The Utility of Religion* echoes its beginning; and if it had been a little less drab in style it might have influenced many more.

But Bentham's ostensible restriction of his logic to practical problems of law and morals secured him a wider influence than was wielded by any of the higher publicists of his day. The whole tendency of his school was intensely rationalistic; and it indirectly affected all thought by its treatment of economics, which from Hume and Smith onwards had been practically divorced from theology. Even clerical economists, such as Malthus and Chalmers, alike orthodox in religion, furthered naturalism in philosophy in spite of themselves by their insistence on the law of population, which is the negation of divine benevolence as popularly conceived. A not unnatural result was a religious fear of all reasoning whatever, and a disparagement of the very faculty of reason. This, however, was sharply resisted by the more cultured champions of orthodoxy,[2] to the great advantage of critical discussion.

10. When English metaphysical philosophy revived with Sir William Hamilton,[3] it was on the lines of a dialectical resistance to the pantheism of Germany, in the interests of faith; though Hamilton's dogmatic views were always doubtful.[4] Admirably learned, and adroit in metaphysical fence, he always grounded his theism on the alleged "needs of our moral nature"—a declaration of philosophical bankruptcy. The vital issue was brought to the front after his death in the Bampton Lectures (1858) of his supporter Dean Mansel; and between them they gave the decisive proof that the orthodox cause had been philosophically lost while being socially won, since their theism emphasized in the strongest way the negative criticism of Kant, leaving deity void of all philosophically cognizable qualities. Hamilton and Mansel alike have received

[1] Under the pseudonym of Philip Beauchamp. See *The Minor Works of George Grote*, edited by Professor Bain, 1873, p. 18; *Athenæum*, May 31, 1873; J. S. Mill's *Autobiography*, p. 69; and *Three Essays on Religion*, p. 76.

[2] Cp. Morell, *Spec. Philos. of Europe in the Nineteenth Century*, ii. 620; and *Life and Corr. of Whately*, by E. Jane Whately, abridged ed. p. 159.

[3] Articles in the *Edinburgh Review* (1829–30); and professorial lectures at Edinburgh 1839–56).

[4] Cp. Veitch's *Memoir*, pp. 195–97.

severe treatment at the hands of Mill and others for the calculated irrationalism and the consequent immoralism of their doctrine, which insisted on attributing moral bias to an admittedly Unknowable Absolute, and on standing for Christian mysteries on the skeptical ground that reason is an imperfect instrument, and that our moral faculties and feelings "demand" the traditional beliefs. But they did exactly what was needed to force rationalism upon open and able minds. It is indeed astonishing to find so constantly repeated by trained reasoners the old religious blunder of *reasoning* from the *inadequacy* of reason to the need for faith. The disputant says in effect: "Our reason is not to be trusted; let us then on that score rationally decide to believe what is handed down to us": for if the argument is not a process of reasoning it is nothing; and if it is to stand, it is an assertion of the validity it denies. Evidently the number of minds capable of such self-stultification is great; but among minds at once honest and competent the number capable of detecting the absurdity must be considerable; and the invariable result of its use down to our own time is to multiply unbelievers in the creed so absurdly defended.

It is difficult to free Mansel from the charge of seeking to confuse and bewilder; but mere contact with the processes of reasoning in his Bampton Lectures is almost refreshing after much acquaintance with the see-saw of vituperation and platitude which up to that time mostly passed muster for defence of religion in nineteenth-century England. He made for a revival of intellectual life. And he suffered enough at the hands of his co-religionists, including F. D. Maurice, to set up something like compassion in the mind of the retrospective rationalist. Accused of having adopted "the absolute and infinite, as defined after the leaders of German metaphysics," as a "synonym for the true and living God," he protested that he had done "exactly the reverse. I assert that the absolute and infinite, as defined in the German metaphysics, *and in all other metaphysics with which I am acquainted*, is a notion which destroys itself by its own contradictions. I believe *also* that God is, in some manner incomprehensible by me, both absolute and infinite; and that those attributes exist in Him *without any repugnance or contradiction at all.* Hence I maintain throughout that *the infinite of philosophy is not the true infinite.*"[1] Charged further with borrowing

[1] Bampton Lectures on *The Limits of Religious Thought*, 4th ed. pref. p. xxxvi, *note*. After thus declaring all metaphysics to be profoundly delusive, Mansel shows at his worst (*Philosophy of the Conditioned*, 1866, p. 188) by disparaging Mill as an incompetent metaphysician.

without acknowledgment from Newman, the Dean was reduced to crediting Newman with "transcendent gifts" while claiming to have read almost nothing by him,[1] and winding up with a quotation from Newman inviting men to seek solace from the sense of nescience in blind belief.

It was said of Hamilton that, "having scratched his eyes out in the bush of reason, he scratched them in again in the bush of faith"; and when that could obviously be said also of his reverend pupil, the philosophic tide was clearly on the turn. Within two years of the delivery of Mansel's lectures his and Hamilton's philosophic positions were being confidently employed as an open and avowed basis for the naturalistic *First Principles* (1860–62) of HERBERT SPENCER, wherein, with an unfortunate laxity of metaphysic on the author's own part, and a no less unfortunate lack of consistency as regards the criticism of religious and anti-religious positions,[2] the new cosmic conceptions are unified in a masterly conception of evolution as a universal law. This service, the rendering of which was quite beyond the capacity of the multitude of Spencer's metaphysical critics, marks him as one of the great influences of his age. Strictly, the book is a "System of Nature" rather than a philosophy in the sense of a study of the grounds and limitations of knowledge; that is to say, it is on the former ground alone that it is coherent and original. But its very imperfections on the other side have probably promoted its reception among minds already shaken in theology by the progress of concrete science; while at the same time such imperfections give a hostile foothold to the revived forms of theism. In any case, the "agnostic" foundation supplied by the despairing dialectic of Hamilton and Mansel has always constituted the most effective part of the Spencerian case.

11. The effect of the ethical pressure of the deistic attack on the intelligence of educated Christians was fully seen even within the Anglican Church before the middle of the century. The unstable Coleridge, who had gone round the whole compass of opinion[3] when he began to wield an influence over the more sensitive of the younger Churchmen, was strenuous in a formal affirmation of the doctrine of the Trinity, but no less anxious to modify the doctrine of Atone-

[1] *Id.* p. xxxviii.

[2] Spencer has avowed in his *Autobiography* (ii, 75) what might be surmized by critical readers, that he wrote the First Part of *First Principles* in order to guard against the charge of "materialism." This motive led him to misrepresent "atheism," and there was a touch of retribution in the general disregard of his disavowal of materialism, at which he expresses surprise. The broad fact remains that for prudential reasons he set forth at the very outset of his system a set of conclusions which could properly be reached only at the end, if at all.

[3] As to his fluctuations, which lasted till his death, cp. the author's *New Essays towards a Critical Method*, 1897, pp. 144–47, 149–54, 168–69.

ment on which the conception of the Trinity was historically founded. In the hands of Maurice the doctrine of sacrifice became one of example to the end of subjective regeneration of the sinner. This view, which was developed by John the Scot—perhaps from hints in Origen[1]—and again by Bernardino Ochino,[2] is specially associated with the teaching of Coleridge; but it was quite independently held in England before him by the Anglican Dr. Parr (1747–1825), who appears to have been heterodox upon most points in the orthodox creed,[3] and who, like Servetus and Coleridge and Hegel, held by a modal as against a "personal" Trinity. The advance in ethical sensitiveness which had latterly marked English thought, and which may perhaps be traced in equal degrees to the influence of Shelley and to that of Bentham, counted for much in this shifting of Christian ground. The doctrine of salvation by faith was by many felt to be morally indefensible. Such Unitarian accommodations presumably reconciled to Christianity and the Church many who would otherwise have abandoned them; and the only orthodox rebuttal seems to have been the old and dangerous resort to the Butlerian argument, to the effect that the God of Nature shows no such benign fatherliness as the anti-sacrificial school ascribe to him.[4] This could only serve to emphasize the moral bankruptcy of Butler's philosophy, to which Mansel, in an astonishing passage of his Bampton Lectures,[5] had shown himself incredibly blind.

The same pressure of moral argument was doubtless potent in the development of "Socinian" or other rationalistic views in the Protestant Churches of Germany, Holland, Hungary, Switzerland, and France in the first half of the century. Such development had gone so far that by the middle of the century the Churches in question were, to the eye of an English evangelical champion, predominantly rationalistic, and in that sense "infidel."[6] Reactions have been claimed before and since; but in our own age there is little to show for them. In the United States, again, the ethical element probably predominated in the recoil of EMERSON from Christian orthodoxy even of the Unitarian stamp, as well as in the heresy of THEODORE PARKER, whose aversion to the theistic ethic

[1] Baur, *Die christliche Lehre der Versöhnung*, 1838, pp. 54–63, 124–31.
[2] Benrath, *Bernardino Ochino*, Eng. tr. pp. 248–87.
[3] Field's *Memoirs of Parr*, 1828, ii. 363, 374–79.
[4] See Pearson's *Infidelity, its Aspects, Causes, and Agencies*, 1853, p. 215 *sq.* The position of Maurice and Parr (associated with other and later names) is there treated as one of the prevailing forms of "infidelity," and called spiritualism. In Germany the orthodox made the same dangerous answer to the theistic criticism. See the *Memoirs of F. Perthes*, Eng. tr. 2nd. ed. ii, 242–43.
[5] Ed. cited, pp. 158–59.
[6] Pearson, as cited, pp. 560–62, 568–79, 584–84.

of Jonathan Edwards was so strong as to make him blind to the reasoning power of that stringent Calvinist.

12. A powerful and wholesome stimulus was given to English thought throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century by the many-sided influence of JOHN STUART MILL, who, beginning by a brilliant *System of Logic* (1843), which he followed up with a less durable exposition of the *Principles of Political Economy* (1848), became through his shorter works *On Liberty* and on various political problems one of the most popular of the serious writers of his age. It was not till the posthumous issue of his *Autobiography* and his *Three Essays on Religion* (1874) that many of his readers realized how complete was his alienation from the current religion, from his childhood up. In his *Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy* (1865), indeed, he had indignantly repudiated the worship of an unintelligibly good God; but he had there seemed to take for granted the God-idea; and save in inconclusive passages in the *Liberty* (1859) he had indicated no rejection of Christianity. But though the *Liberty* was praised by Kingsley and contemned by Carlyle, it made for freethinking no less than for tolerance; and his whole life's work made for reason. "The saint of rationalism" was Gladstone's[1] account of him as a parliamentarian. His posthumous presentment to the world of the strange conception of a limited-liability God, the victim of circumstances—a theorem which meets neither the demand for a theistic explanation of the universe nor the worshipper's craving for support—sets up some wonder as to his philosophy; but was probably as disintegrative of orthodoxy as a more philosophical performance would have been.

SECTION 7.—MODERN JEWRY

In the culture-life of the dispersed Jews, in the modern period, there is probably as much variety of credence in regard to religion as occurs in the life of Christendom so called. Such names as those of Spinoza, Jacobi, Moses Mendelssohn, Heine, and Karl Marx tell sufficiently of Jewish service to freethought; and each one of these must have had many disciples of his own race. Deism among the educated Jews of Germany in the eighteenth century was probably common.[2] The famous Rabbi Elijah of Wilna (d. 1797), entitled the Gaon, "the great one," set up a movement of relatively rationalistic pietism that led to the establishment in 1803 of a Rabbinical

[1] Letter in W. L. Courtney's *J. S. Mill*, 1889, p. 142.
[2] Cp. Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, 1896, pp. 59, 71. Schechter writes with a marked Judaic prejudice.

college at Walosin, which has flourished ever since, and had in 1888 no fewer than 400 students, among whose successors there goes on a certain amount of independent study.[1] In the freer world outside critical thought has asserted itself within the pale of orthodox Judaism; witness such a writer as Nachman Krochmal (1785–1840), whose posthumous *Guide to the Perplexed of the Time*[2] (1851), though not a scientific work, is ethically and philosophically in advance of the orthodox Judaism of its age. Of Krochmal it has been said that he "was inspired in his work by the study of Hegel, just as Maimonides had been by the study of Aristotle."[3] The result is only a liberalizing of Jewish orthodoxy in the light of historic study,[4] such as went on among Christians in the same period; but it is thus a stepping-stone to further science.

To-day educated Jewry is divided in somewhat the same proportions as Christendom into absolute rationalists and liberal and fanatical believers; and representatives of all three types, of different social grades, may be found among the Zionists, whose movement for the acquisition of a new racial home has attracted so much attention and sympathy in recent years. Whether or not that movement attains to any decisive political success, Judaism clearly cannot escape the solvent influences which affect all European opinion. As in the case of the Christian Church, the synagogue in the centres of culture keeps the formal adherence of some who no longer think on its plane; but while attempts are made from time to time to set up more rationalistic institutions for Jews with the modern bias, the general tendency is to a division between devotees of the old forms and those who have decided to live by reason.

Section 8.—The Oriental Civilizations

We have already seen, in discussing the culture histories of India, China, and Moslem Persia, how ancient elements of rationalism continue to germinate more or less obscurely in the unpropitious soils of Asiatic life. Ignorance is in most oriental countries too immensely preponderant to permit of any other species of survival. But sociology, while recognizing the vast obstacles to the higher life presented by conditions which with a fatal facility multiply the lower, can set no limit to the possibilities of upward evolution. The case of Japan is a sufficient rebuke to the thoughtless iterators of the formula of the "unprogressiveness of the East." While a

[1] *Id.* pp. 117–18.
[2] This title imitates that of the famous *More Nebuchim* of Maimonides.
[3] Zunz, cited by Schechter, p. 79.
[4] Whence Krochmal is termed the Father of Jewish Science. *Id.* p. 81.

heerfully superstitious religion is there still normal among the nass, the transformation of the political ideals and practice of the ation under the influence of European example is so great as to e unparalleled in human history; and it has inevitably involved he substitution of rationalism for supernaturalism among the great najority of the educated younger generation. The late YUKICHI FUKUZAWA, who did more than any other man to prepare the apanese mind for the great transformation effected in his time, was pontaneously a freethinker from his childhood;[1] and through a ong life of devoted teaching he trained thousands to a naturalist vay of thought. That they should revert to Christian or native rthodoxy seems as impossible as such an evolution is seen to be n educated Hindostan, where the higher orders of intelligence are robably not relatively more common than among the Japanese. The final question, there as everywhere, is one of social reconstruc- ion and organization; and in the enormous population of China he problem, though very different in degree of imminence, is the ame in kind. Perhaps the most hopeful consideration of all is that f the ever-increasing inter-communication which makes European nd American progress tend in every succeeding generation to tell nore and more on Asiatic life.

As to Japan, Professor B. H. Chamberlain pronounced twenty years ago that the Japanese "now bow down before the shrine of Herbert Spencer" (*Things Japanese*, 3rd ed. 1898, p. 321. Cp. *Religious Systems of the World*, 3rd ed. p. 103), proceeding in another connection (p. 352) to describe them as *essentially* an undevotional people. Such a judgment would be hard to sustain. The Japanese people in the past have exhibited the amount of superstition normal in their culture stage (cp. the *Voyages de C. P. Thunberg au Japon*, French tr. 1796, iii, 206); and in our own day they differ from Western peoples on this side merely in respect of their greater general serenity of temperament. There were in Japan in 1894 no fewer than 71,831 Buddhist temples, and 190,803 Shinto temples and shrines; and the largest temple of all, costing "several million dollars," was built in the last dozen years of the nineteenth century. To the larger shrines there are habitual pilgrimages, the numbers annually visiting one leading Buddhist shrine reaching from 200,000 to 250,000, while at the Shintô shrine of Kompira the pilgrims are said to number about 900,000 each year. (See *The Evolution of the Japanese*, 1903, by L. Gulick, an American missionary organizer.)

[1] *A Life of Mr. Yukichi Fukuzawa*, by Asatarô Miyamori, revised by Prof. E. H. Vickers, Tokyo, 1902, pp. 9–10.

Professor Chamberlain appears to have construed "devotional" in the light of a special conception of true devotion. Yet a Christian observer testifies, of the revivalist sect of Nichirenites, "the Ranters of Buddhism," that "the wildest excesses that seek the mantle of religion in other lands are by them equalled if not excelled" (Griffis, *The Mikado's Empire*, 1876, p. 163); and Professor Chamberlain admits that "the religion of the family binds them [the Japanese in general, including the 'most materialistic'] down in truly sacred bonds"; while another writer, who thinks Christianity desirable for Japan, though he apparently ranks Japanese morals above Christian, declares that in his travels he was much reassured by the superstition of the innkeepers, feeling thankful that his hosts were "not Agnostics or Secularists," but devout believers in future punishments (Tracy, *Rambles through Japan without a Guide*, 1892, pp. 131, 276, etc.).

A third authority with Japanese experience, Professor W. G. Dixon, while noting a generation ago that "among certain classes in Japan not only religious earnestness but fanaticism and superstition still prevail," decides that "at the same time it remains true that the Japanese are not in the main a very religious people, and that at the present day religion is in lower repute than probably it has ever been in the country's history. Religious indifference is one of the prominent features of new Japan" (*The Land of the Morning*, 1882, p. 517). The reconciliation of these estimates lies in the recognition of the fact that the Japanese populace is religious in very much the same way as those of Italy and England, while the more educated classes are rationalistic, not because of any "essential" incapacity for "devotion," but because of enlightenment and lack of countervailing social pressure. To the eye of the devotional Protestant the Catholics of Italy, with their regard to externals, seem "essentially" irreligious; and *vice versâ*. Such formulas miss science. Two hundred years ago Charron, following previous schematists, made a classification in which northerners figured as strong, active, stupid, warlike, and little given to religion; the southerners as slight, abstinent, obstinate, unwarlike, and superstitious; and the "middle" peoples as between the two. *La Sagesse*, liv. i, ch. 42. The cognate formulas of to-day are hardly more trustworthy. Buddhism triumphed over Shintôism in Japan both in ancient and modern times precisely because its lore and ritual make so much more appeal to the devotional sense. (Cp. Chamberlain, pp. 358–62; Dixon, ch. x; *Religious Systems of the World*, pp. 103, 111; Griffis, p. 166.) But the æsthetically charming cult of the family, with its poetic recognition of ancestral spirits (as to which see Lafcadio Hearn, *Japan: An Attempt at Interpretation*, 1904), seems to hold its ground as well as any.

So universal is sociological like other law that we find in Japan, among some freethinkers, the same disposition as among some in Europe to decide that religion is necessary for the people. Professor Chamberlain (p. 352) cites Fukuzawa, "Japan's most representative thinker and educationist," as openly declaring that "It goes without saying that the maintenance of peace and security in society requires a religion. For this purpose any religion will do. I lack a religious nature, and have never believed in any religion. I am thus open to the charge that I am advising others to be religious while I am not so. Yet my conscience does not permit me to clothe myself with religion when I have it not at heart.....Of religions there are several kinds—Buddhism, Christianity, and what not. From my standpoint there is no more difference between those than between green tea and black.....See that the stock is well selected and the prices cheap....." (*Japan Herald*, September 9, 1897). To this view, however, Fukuzawa did not finally adhere. The Rev. Isaac Dooman, a missionary in Japan who knew him well, testifies to a change that was taking place in his views in later life regarding the value of religion. In an unpublished letter to Mr. Robert Young, of Kobe, Mr. Dooman says that on one occasion, when conversing on the subject of Christianity, Fukuzawa remarked: "There was a time when I advocated its adoption as a means to elevate our lower classes; but, after finding out that all Christian countries have their own lower classes just as bad, if not worse than ours, I changed my mind." Further reflection, marked by equal candour, may lead the pupils of Fukuzawa to see that nations cannot be led to adore any form of "tea" by the mere assurance of its indispensableness from leaders who confess they never take any. His view is doubtless shared by those priests concerning whom "it may be questioned whether in their fundamental beliefs the more scholarly of the Shinshiû priests differ very widely from the materialistic agnostics of Europe" (Dixon, p. 516). In this state of things the Christian thinks he sees his special opportunity. Professor Dixon writes (p. 518), in the manner of the missionary, that "decaying shrines and broken gods are to be seen everywhere. Not only is there indifference, but there is a rapidly-growing skepticism. .....The masses too are becoming affected by it.....Shintôism and.....Buddhism are doomed. What is to take their place? .....It must be either Christianity or Atheism. We have the brightest hopes that the former will triumph in the near future....."

The American missionary before cited, Mr. Gulick, argues alternately that the educated Japanese are religious and that they are not, meaning that they have "religious instincts," while rejecting current creeds. The so-called religious instinct

is in fact simply the spirit of moral and intellectual seriousness. Mr. Gulick's summing-up, as distinct from his theory and forecast, is as follows: "For about three hundred years the intelligence of the nation has been dominated by Confucian thought, which rejects active belief in supra-human beings. .....The tendency of all persons trained in Confucian classics was towards thoroughgoing skepticism as to divine beings and their relation to this world. For this reason, beyond doubt, has Western agnosticism found so easy an entrance into Japan. .....*Complete indifference to religion is characteristic of the educated classes of to-day.* Japanese and foreigners, Christians and non-Christians alike, unite in this opinion. The impression usually conveyed by this statement, however, is that agnosticism is a new thing in Japan. In point of fact, the old agnosticism is merely reinforced by.....the agnosticism of the West" (*The Evolution of the Japanese*, pp. 286–87). This may be taken as broadly accurate. Cp. the author's paper on "Freethought in Japan" in the *Agnostic Annual* for 1906. Professor E. H. Parker notes (*China and Religion*, 1905, p. 263) that "the Japanese in translating Western books are beginning, to the dismay of our missionaries, to leave out all the Christianity that is in them."

But a very grave danger to the intellectual and moral life of Japan has been of late set up by a new application of Shintôism, on the lines of the emperor-worship of ancient Rome. A recent pamphlet by Professor Chamberlain, entitled *The Invention of a New Religion* (R. P. A.; 1912), incidentally shows that the Japanese temperament is so far from being "essentially" devoid of devotion as to be capable of building up a fresh cultus to order. It appears that since the so-called Restoration of 1868, when the Imperial House, after more than two centuries of seclusion in Kyoto, was brought from its retirement and the Emperor publicly installed as ruler by right of his divine origin, the sentiment of religious devotion to the Imperial House has been steadily inculcated, reaching its height during the Russo-Japanese War, when the messages of victorious generals and admirals piously ascribed their successes over the enemy to the "virtues of the Imperial Ancestors." In every school throughout the Empire there hangs a portrait of the emperor, which is regarded and treated as is a sacred image in Russia and in Catholic countries. The curators of schools have been known on occasion of fire and earthquake to save the imperial portrait before wife or child; and their action has elicited popular acclamation. On the imperial birthday teachers and pupils assemble, and passing singly before the portrait, bow in solemn adoration.

The divine origin of the Imperial House and the grossly mythical history of the early emperors are taught as articles of faith in Japanese schools precisely as the cosmogony of Genesis has been taught for ages in the schools of Christendom, Some years ago a professor who exposed the absurdity of the chronology upon which the religion is based was removed from his post, and a teacher who declined to bow before a casket containing an imperial rescript was dismissed. His life was, in fact, for some time in danger from the fury of the populace. So dominant has Mikado-worship become that some Japanese Christian pastors have endeavoured to reconcile it with Christianity, and to be Mikado-worshippers and Christ-worshippers at the same time.[1] All creeds are nominally tolerated in Japan, but avowed heresy as to the divine origin of the Imperial House is a bar to public employment, and exposes the heretic to suspicion of treason. The new religion, which is merely old Shintôism revised, has been invented as a political expedient, and may possibly not long survive the decease of Mutsu Hito, the late emperor, who continued throughout his reign to live in comparative seclusion, and has been succeeded by a young prince educated on European lines. But the cult has obtained a strong hold upon the people; and by reason of social pressure receives the conventional support of educated men exactly as Christianity does in England, America, Germany, and Russia.

Thus there is not "plain sailing" for freethought in Japan. In such a political atmosphere neither moral nor scientific thought has a good prognosis; and if it be not changed for the better much of the Japanese advance may be lost. Rationalism on any large scale is always a product of culture; and culture for the mass of the people of Japan has only recently begun. Down till the middle of the nineteenth century nothing more than sporadic freethought existed.[2] Some famous captains were irreverent as to the omens; and in a seventeenth-century manual of the principles of government, ascribed to the great founder of modern feudalism, Iyéyasu, the sacrifices of vassals at the graves of their lords are denounced,

[1] Pamphlet cited, p. 16.

[2] A curious example of sporadic freethought occurs in a pamphlet published towards the end of the eighteenth century. In 1771 a writer named Motoöri began a propaganda in favour of Shintôism with the publication of a tract entitled *Spirit of Straightening*. This tract emphatically asserted the divinity of the Mikado, and elicited a reply from another writer named Ichikawa, who wrote: "The Japanese word *kami* (God) was simply a title of honour; but in consequence of its having been used to translate the Chinese character *shin* (*shên*) a meaning has come to be attached to it which it did not originally possess. The ancestors of the Mikados were not Gods, but men, and were no doubt worthy to be reverenced for their virtues; but their acts were not miraculous nor supernatural. If the ancestors of living men were not human beings, they are more likely to have been birds or beasts than Gods." Art.: "The Revival of Pure Shinto," by Sir E. N. Satow, in *Trans. Asiatic Society of Japan.*

and Confucius is even cited as ridiculing the burial of effigies in substitution.[1] But, as elsewhere under similar conditions, such displays of originality were confined to the ruling caste.[2] I have seen, indeed, a delightful popular satire, apparently a product of mother-wit, on the methods of popular Buddhist shrine-making; but, supposing it to be genuine and vernacular, it can stand only for that measure of freethought which is never absent from any society not pithed by a long process of religious tyranny. Old Japan, with its intense feudal discipline and its indurated etiquette, exhibited the social order, the grace, the moral charm, and the intellectual vacuity of a hive of bees. The higher mental life was hardly in evidence; and the ethical literature of native inspiration is of no importance.[3] To this day the educated Chinese, though lacking in Japanese "efficiency" and devotion to drill of all kinds, are the more freely intellectual in their habits of mind. The Japanese feudal system, indeed, was so immitigably ironbound, so incomparably destructive of individuality in word, thought, and deed, that only in the uncodified life of art and handicraft was any free play of faculty possible. What has happened of late is the rapid and docile assimilation of western science. Another and a necessarily longer step is the independent development of the speculative and critical intelligence; and in the East, as in the West, this is subject to economic conditions.

A similar generalization holds good as to the other Oriental civilizations. Analogous developments to those seen in the latter-day Mohammedan world, and equally marked by fluctuation, have been noted in the mental life alike of the non-Mohammedan and the Mohammedan peoples of India; and at the present day the thought of the relatively small educated class is undoubtedly much affected by the changes going on in that of Europe, and especially of England. The vast Indian masses, however, are far from anything in the nature of critical culture; and though some system of education for them is probably on the way to establishment,[4] their life must long remain quasi-primitive, mentally as well as physically. Buddhism is theoretically more capable of adaptation to a rationalist view of life than is Christianity; but its intellectual activities at present seem to tend more towards an "esoteric" credulity than towards a rational or scientific adjustment to life.

[1] Lafcadio Hearn, *Japan: An Attempt at Interpretation*, 1904, p. 313; cp. p. 46.
[2] Thus the third emperor of the Ming dynasty in China (1425–1435), referring to the belief in a future life, makes the avowal: "I am fain to sigh with despair when I see that in our own day men are just as superstitious as ever" (Prof. E. H. Parker, *China and Religion*, 1905, p. 99).
[3] See Hearn, as cited, *passim*.
[4] Cp. Sir F. S. P. Lely, *Suggestions for the Better Governing of India*, 1906, p 59.

Of the nature of the influence of Buddhism in Burmah, where it has prospered, a vivid and thoughtful account is given in the work of H. Fielding, *The Soul of a People*, 1898. At its best the cult there deifies the Buddha; elsewhere, it is interwoven with aboriginal polytheism and superstition (Davids, *Buddhism*, pp. 207–211; Max Müller, *Anthro. Rel.*, p. 132).

Within Brahmanism, again, there have been at different times attempts to set up partly naturalistic reforms in religious thought—*e.g.* that of Chaitanya in the sixteenth century; but these have never been pronouncedly freethinking, and Chaitanya preached a "surrender of all to Krishna," very much in the manner of evangelical Christianity. Finally he has been deified by his followers. (Müller, *Nat. Rel.* p. 100; *Phys. Rel.* p. 356.)

More definitely freethinking was the monotheistic cult set up among the Sikhs in the fifteenth century, as the history runs, by Nanak, who had been influenced both by Parsees and by Mohammedans, and whose ethical system repudiated caste. But though Nanak objected to any adoration of himself, he and all his descendants have been virtually deified by his devotees, despite their profession of a theoretically pantheistic creed. (Cp. De la Saussaye, *Manual of the Science of Religion*, Eng. tr. pp. 659-62; Müller, *Phys. Rel.* p. 355.) Trumpp (*Die Religion der Sikhs*, 1881, p. 123) tells of other Sikh sects, including one of a markedly atheistic character belonging to the nineteenth century; but all alike seem to gravitate towards Hinduism.

Similarly among the Jainas, who compare with the Buddhists in their nominal atheism as in their tenderness to animals and in some other respects, there has been decline and compromise; and their numbers appear steadily to dwindle, though in India they survived while Buddhism disappeared. Cp. De la Saussaye, *Manual*, pp. 557–63; Rev. J. Robson, *Hinduism*, 1874, pp. 80–86; Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 141. Finally, the Brahmo-Somaj movement of the nineteenth century appears to have come to little in the way of rationalism (Mitchell, *Hinduism*, pp. 224–46; De la Saussaye, pp. 669–71; Tiele, p. 160).

The principle of the interdependence of the external and the internal life, finally, applies even in the case of Turkey. The notion that Turkish civilization in Europe is unimprovable, though partly countenanced by despondent thinkers even among the enlightened Turks,[1] had no justification in social science, though bad politics may ruin the Turkish, like other Moslem States; and although Turkish freethinking has not in general passed the theistic stage,[2]

[1] See article on "The Future of Turkey" in the *Contemporary Review*, April, 1899, by "A Turkish Official."

[2] Yet, as early as the date of the Crimean War, it was noted by an observer that "young Turkey makes profession of atheism." Ubicini, *La Turquie actuelle*, 1855, p. 361. Cp. Sir

and its spread is grievously hindered by the national religiosity,[1] which the age-long hostility of the Christian States so much tends to intensify, a gradual improvement in the educational and political conditions would suffice to evolve it, according to the observed laws of all civilization. It may be that a result of the rationalistic evolution in the other European States will be to make them intelligently friendly to such a process, where at present they are either piously malevolent towards the rival creed or merely self-seeking as against each other's influence on Turkish destinies.

In any case, it cannot seriously be pretended that the mental life of Christian Greece in modern times has yielded, apart from services to simple scholarship, a much better result to the world at large than has that of Turkey. The usual reactions in individual cases of course take place. An American traveller writing in 1856 notes how illiterate Greek priests glory in their ignorance, "asserting that a more liberal education has the effect of making atheists of the youth." He adds that he has "known several deacons and others in the University [of Athens] that were skeptics even as to the truth of religion," and would gladly have become laymen if they could have secured a livelihood.[2] But there was then and later in the century no measurable movement of a rationalistic kind. At the time of the emancipation the Greek priesthood was "in general at once the most ignorant and the most vicious portion of the community";[3] and it remained socially predominant and reactionary. "Whatever progress has been made in Greece has received but little assistance from them."[4] Liberal-minded professors in the theological school were mutinied against by bigoted students,[5] a type still much in evidence at Athens; and the liberal thinker Theophilus Kaïres, charged with teaching "atheistic doctrines," and found guilty with three of his followers, died of jail fever while his appeal to the Areopagus was pending.[6]

Thus far Christian bigotry seems to have held its own in what once was Hellas. On the surface, Greece shows little trace of instructed freethought; while in Bulgaria, by Greek testimony, school teachers openly proclaim their rationalism, and call for the exclusion of religious teaching from the schools.[7] Despite the

G. Campbell, *A Very Recent View of Turkey*, 2nd ed. 1878, p. 65. Vambéry makes somewhat light of such tendencies (*Der Islam im 19ten Jahrhundert*, 1875, pp. 185, 187); but admits cases of atheism even among mollahs, as a result of European culture (p. 101).

[1] Ubicini (p. 344), with Vambéry and most other observers, pronounces the Turks the most religious people in Europe.

[2] H. M. Baird, *Modern Greece*, New York, 1856, pp. 123-24.

[3] *Id.*, p. 320. [4] *Id.* p. 339. [5] *Id.* p. 86. [6] *Id.* p. 340.

[7] Prof. Neocles Karasis, *Greeks and Bulgarians in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, London, 1907, pp. 15-17, citing a Bulgarian journal.

political freedom of the Christian State, there has thus far occurred there no such general fertilization by the culture of the rest of Europe as is needed to produce a new intellectual evolution of any importance. The mere geographical isolation of modern Greece from the main currents of European thought and commerce is probably the most retardative of her conditions; and it is hard to see how it can be countervailed. Italy, in comparison, is pulsating with original life, industrial and intellectual. But, given either a renascence of Mohammedan civilization or a great political reconstruction such as is latterly on foot, the whole life of the nearer East may take a new departure; and in such an evolution Greece would be likely to share.

CONCLUSION

ANY fuller survey of the intellectual history of the nineteenth century will but reveal more fully the signal and ever-widening growth of rational thought among all classes of the more advanced nations, and among the more instructed of the less advanced. The retrospect of the whole past tells of a continuous evolution, which in the twentieth century proceeds more extensively than ever before. There has emerged the curious fact that in our own country a measure of rational doubt has been almost constantly at work in the sphere in which it could perhaps least confidently be expected—to wit, that of poetry. From Chaucer onwards it is hard to find a great orthodox poet. Even Spenser was as much Platonist as Christian; and Marlowe, Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Burns, Wordsworth, Shelley, Byron, Coleridge, Keats, Tennyson, Arnold, and Browning (to name no others) in their various ways baffle the demand of faith. Latterly, the sex which has always been reckoned the more given to religion has shown many signs of adaptation to the higher law. In Britain, as in France, women began to appear in the ranks of reason in the eighteenth century.[1] In the nineteenth the number has increased at a significant rate. Already in the fierce battles fought in the time of reaction after the French Revolution women took their place on the side of freedom; and Frances Wright (Madame d'Arusmont) played a notable part as a free-thinking publicist and philanthropist.[2] Since her day the names of

[1] In the Edinburgh *Mirror* of 1779 (No. 30) Henry Mackenzie speaks of women free-thinkers as a new phenomenon.

[2] "She bought 2,000 acres in Tennessee, and peopled them with slave families she purchased and redeemed" (Wheeler, *Biog. Dict.*).

Harriet Martineau and George Eliot tell of the continual gain of knowledge; and women rationalists are now to be counted by thousands in all the more civilized countries.

The same law holds of public life in general. Gladstone eagerly maintained in his latter years that politicians, in virtue of their practical hold of life, were little given to skepticism; but the facts were and are increasingly against him. The balance of the evidence is against the ascription of orthodoxy to either of the Pitts, or to Fox; and we have seen that the statesmen of the American Revolution, as of the French, were in general deists. Garibaldi[1] in Italy, and Gambetta in France, were freethinkers; Lincoln and his opponent, Douglas, were deists; towards the close of the century, in New Zealand, Sir Robert Stout and the late Mr. John Ballance, avowed rationalists, were among the foremost politicians of their generation; and in the English Cabinet rationalism began to be represented in the person of Lord Morley.

While such developments have been possible in the fierce light of political strife, the process of disintegration and decomposition has proceeded in society at large till unbelief can hardly be reckoned a singularity. Within the pale of all the Christian Churches dogmatic belief has greatly dwindled, and goes on dwindling: and "Christianity" is made to figure more and more as an ethical doctrine which has abandoned its historical foundations, while preserving formulas and rituals which have no part in rational ethics. The mythical cosmogony out of which the whole originally grew is no longer believed in by any educated person, though it is habitually presented to the young as divine truth. Thousands of clergymen, economically gripped to a false position, would gladly rectify their professed creeds, but cannot; because the political and economic bases involve the consent of the majority, and changes cannot be made without angry resistance and uproar among the less instructed multitude of all classes. The Protestant Churches collectively dread to figure as repudiating the historic creed; while the Roman Catholic Church, conscious of the situation, maintains a semblance of rigid discipline and a minimum standard of instruction for its adherents, counting on holding its ground while the faculty of uncritical faith subsists. Only by the silent alienation of the more thoughtful and sincere minds from the priesthood can the show of orthodoxy be maintained even within the Catholic pale.

In all orders alike, nevertheless, the "practice" of religion decays

[1] See Lord Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, 1903, ii, 110–11, as to the embarrassment felt in English official circles at the time of Garibaldi's visit.

with the theory. The Churches are constantly challenged to justify their existence by social reforms and philanthropic works: no other plea passes as generally valid; and it is only by reason of a general transference of interest from religious to social problems that the decay of belief is disguised. "Piety," in the old sense, counts relatively for little; and while orthodoxy is still a means of advantage in political life, religion counts for nothing in international relations. In the war of 1899–1902, "Bible-loving" England forced a quarrel on the most Bible-loving race in the world; and at the time of the penning of these lines six nations are waging the greatest war of all time irrespectively of racial and religious ties alike, though all alike officially claim the support of Omnipotence. In Berlin a popular preacher edifies great audiences by proclaiming that "God is not neutral"; and his Emperor habitually parades the same faith, with the support of all the theologians of Germany—the State supremely guilty of the whole embroilment, and the deliberate perpetrator of the grossest aggression in modern history. On the side of the Allies "Christianity" is less systematically but still frequently invoked. On both sides the forms of prayer are officially practised by the non-combatants, very much as the Romans in their wars maintained the practice of augury from the entrails of sacrificed victims; and "family prayer" is said to be reviving.

Everywhere, nevertheless, the more rational, remembering how in the "ages of faith" deadly wars were waged for whole generations in the very name of religion, recognize that Christianity furnishes neither control for the present nor solution for the future; and that the hope of civilization lies in the resort of the nations to human standards of sanity and reciprocity. The ties which hold are those of fellow-citizenship.

There can be no doubt among rationalists that if modern civilization escapes the ruin which militarism brought upon those of all previous eras, the principle of reason will continually widen its control, latterly seen to be everywhere strengthening apart from the dangerous persistence of militarist ideals and impulses. When it controls international relations, it will be dominant in the life of thought. In the words of a great fighter for freethought, "No man ever saw a religion die"; and there are abundant survivals of pre-Christian paganism in Europe after two thousand years of Christianity; but it seems likely that when the history of the twentieth century is written it will be recognized that what has historically figured as religion belongs in all its forms to the past.

The question is sometimes raised whether the age of decline will

be marked by movements of active and persecuting fanaticism. Here, again, the answer must be that everything depends upon the general fortunes of civilization. It is significant that a number of clerical voices proclaim a revival of religion as a product of war, while others complain that the state of struggle has a sterilizing effect upon religious life. While organized religions subsist, there will always be adherents with the will to persecute; and from time to time acts of public persecution occur, in addition to many of a private character. But in Britain public persecution is latterly restricted to cases in which the technical offence of "blasphemy" is associated with acts which come under ordinary police jurisdiction. After the unquestionable blasphemies of Arnold and Swinburne had to be officially ignored, it became impossible, in the present stage of civilization, that any serious and decent literary indictment of the prevailing creeds should be made a subject of persecution; and before long, probably, such indictments will be abandoned in the cases of offenders against police regulations.

The main danger appears to lie in Catholic countries, and from the action of the Catholic hierarchy. The common people everywhere, save in the most backward countries, are increasingly disinclined to persecution. In Ireland there is much less of that spirit among the Catholic population than among that of Protestant Ulster. But the infamous execution of Francisco Ferrer in Spain, in 1909, which aroused passionate reprobation in every civilized country, was defended in England and elsewhere with extravagant baseness by Catholic *littérateurs*, who, with their reactionary priests, are the last to learn the lesson of tolerance. The indignation everywhere excited by the judicial murder[1] of Ferrer, however, gives promise that even the most zealous fanatics of the Catholic Church will hesitate again to rouse the wrath of the nations by such a reversion to the methods of the eras of religious rule.

[1] On the whole case see *The Life, Trial, and Death of Francisco Ferrer*, by William Archer: Chapman & Hall, 1911; and *The Martyrdom of Ferrer*, by Joseph McCabe: R. P. A., 1910.

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